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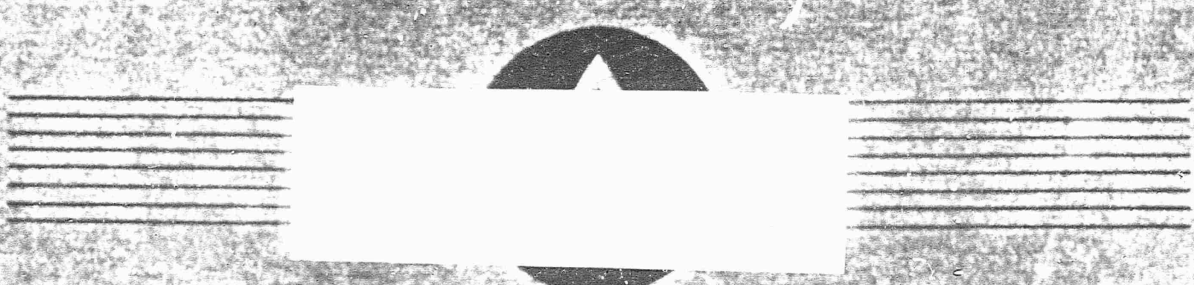
ARMY ROLES, MISSIONS, AND DOCTRINE IN LOW INTENSITY CONFLICT (ARMLIC)

PRECONFLICT CASE STUDY 7
VIETNAM

FINAL REPORT

UNITED STATES ARMY
COMBAT DEVELOPMENTS COMMAND
INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES



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1. This case study of the preconflict period in Vietnam is one of a series undertaken by the US Army Combat Developments Command Institute of Advanced Studies (USACDCIAS), Carlisle Barracks, Pa. (now designated Institute of Land Combat (USACDCILC)). The purpose is to develop a better understanding of the political, economic, social, psychological, public health, scientific-technological, and military factors conducive to low intensity conflict and change of indigenous governmental control. The research effort was done by 12 selected US Army War College students; it does not represent the views of the Army War College or the US Army Combat Developments Command. A total of seven such studies has been completed and have been placed on file at the Defense Documentation Center (DDC) for authorized users.

2. This and the other case studies were used in support of the USACDCIAS project entitled Army Roles, Missions, and Doctrine in Low Intensity Conflict (ARMLIC). However, no assumptions are made as to whether Army actions are desirable or necessary in connection with any given conflict. Rather, it is recognized that Army capabilities, both military and for civilian assistance, are among many means of US Government action available to be used or withheld in furtherance of US policy and national interest; and that these capabilities should be so designed and maintained to best serve the purposes which national authorities may require with the greatest effectiveness and the least cost.

3. The data in this case study have been drawn from open sources, published and unpublished, available through public institutions and Government agencies. No field work is involved, and no policy recommendations are made. The data have been checked against selected classified sources and with knowledgeable individuals. The method used is a modified systems analysis aimed at determining points of tension (or dysfunction) conducive to low intensity conflict. Basic assumptions and methodology, common to all aspects of the ARMLIC study, are on file in USACDCILC.

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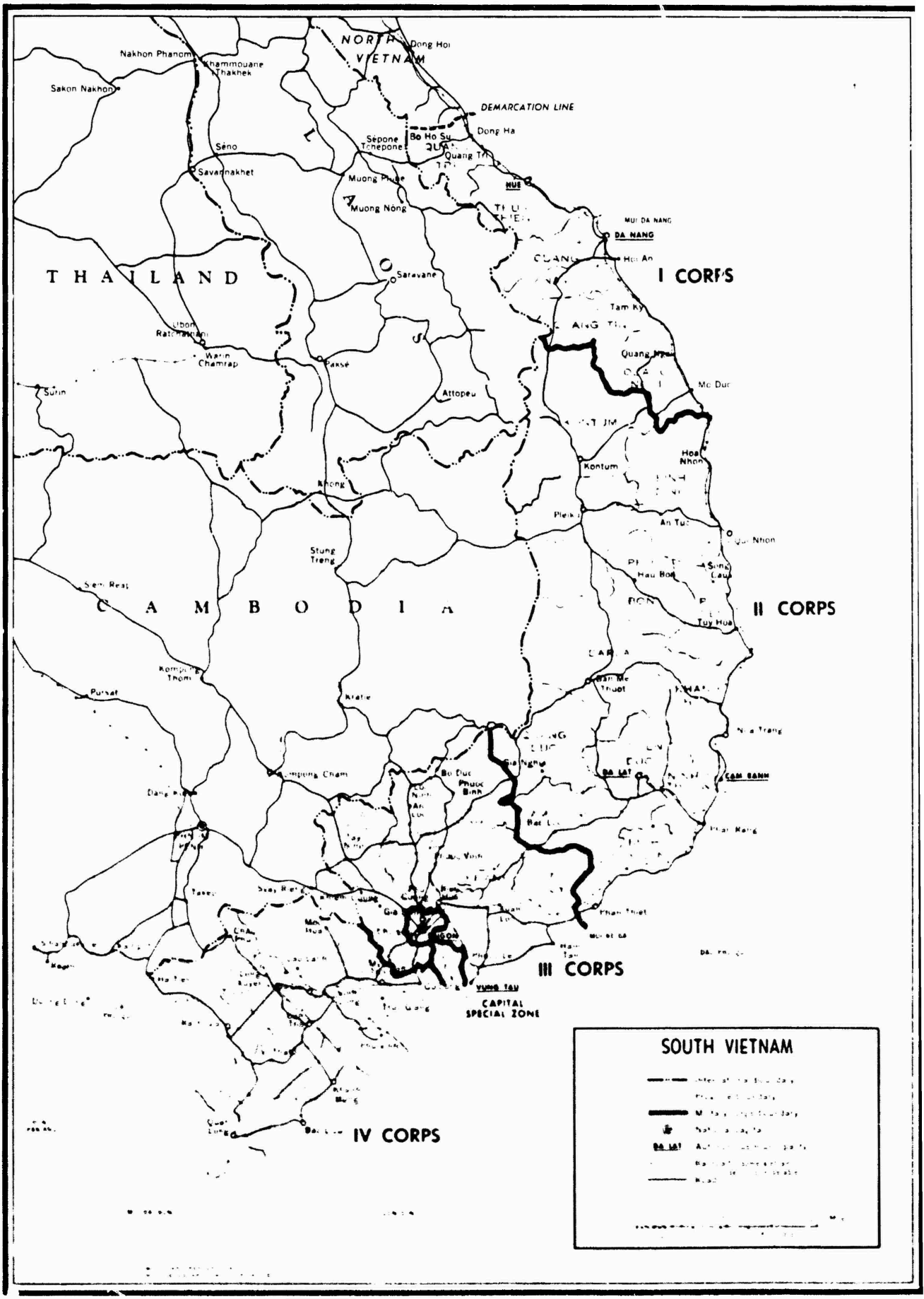

Figure 1. Physical and political map of South Vietnam

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Figure 2. Physical and political map of North Vietnam

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Table I. Factors Conducive to Violence in Vietnam

Political factors.

1. Inadequate political leadership.
2. Lack of specific planning for implementation of independence.
3. Alienation of peasant class from Government.
4. General lack of confidence in the Government.
5. Unresponsive political system.
6. Strong polarization of antipathetic ideologies.

Sociocultural factors.

1. Confucian traditionalism.
2. Breakdown of traditional family village system.
3. Strong regional differences.
4. Underlying class antagonisms.
5. Virtual nonexistence of public health and educational facilities.

Military and security factors.

1. Inefficient police and security forces.
2. Ill-equipped and undertrained military.
3. Interference by civilian government in police and military matters.
4. Public dislike for military forces.
5. Lack of responsiveness among peasants toward military.

Economic factors.

1. Failure to gear over from a rice economy to a balanced economy.
2. Governmental dependence on US aid to supply consumer goods.
3. Lack of investment in expansion and capital goods.
4. Damage to the economic infrastructure.

Table II. Chronology of Salient Preconflict Events in Vietnam

1862-83	French establish control over Vietnam.
1930	Indochinese Communist Party formed.
1940	Vichy France agrees to stationing of Japanese troops in Indochina.
1941	Vietnamese Communists form Vietnamese Independence League (Viet Minh).
1945	
Aug	Japanese surrender to Allies; Communists establish "Provisional Democratic Republic of Vietnam" in Tonkin.
Sep	Bao Dai abdicates to provisional Government and French, British, Indian, and Chinese troops reenter Indochina.
1946	Fighting erupts between French and Communist forces at Haiphong, Langson, and Hanoi.
1948	The State of Vietnam is established with Bao Dai as Chief of State.
1950	The United States and United Kingdom extend recognition to the State of Vietnam, while Communist China and the USSR recognize the Communist Government. The National Army of Vietnam is formed.
1951	United States signs economic aid agreement with Vietnam.
1953	France begins turning over remaining powers to Vietnamese Government.
1954	
26 Apr	Geneva Convention begins.
7 May	Dien Bien Phu falls.
7 Jul	Ngo Dinh Diem appointed Prime Minister by Bao Dai.
26 Jul	Geneva Accords signed.
1955	
1 Jan	United States begins direct assistance to Vietnam.
19 Feb	SEATO organized.

1955 (contd)	
23 Oct	National referendum deposes Bao Dai in favor of Diem.
26 Oct	Diem declares Vietnam a Republic under his presidency.
1958	Communists begin small-scale guerrilla attacks.
1960	Large-scale guerrilla type attacks on Vietnamese Army installation at Tay Ninh indicates growing strength of Communist forces.

SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSIONS: FACTORS CONDUCIVE TO CONFLICT

1. Overview.

a. For study purposes, the preconflict period in Vietnam begins in 1945, when World War II ended in the Pacific, and ends in 1959, when full-scale military fighting began taking place in South Vietnam. These intervening years were a period of great fluctuation, with extremely unstable conditions. They encompass the regimes of Bao Dai and Ngo Dinh Diem in the south and Ho Chi Minh in the north, and the advisory efforts of France and the United States.

b. The blame for the outbreak of full-scale violence in Vietnam cannot be traced to any single factor. The main failings, however, lay chiefly in the social and political areas. The conflict probably can best be described as the interaction of three contributing factors: longstanding social, cultural, and regional tensions; lack of effective leadership in the south; and the presence of a dedicated cadre of Communist guerrillas. Without any of these three elements, it is doubtful that Vietnam would have moved toward conflict.

2. Political factors. During the period under study, the Vietnamese political system was a combination of East and West, French and American parts which often did not function together effectively. A small elite ruled, and, although they were generally dedicated men and women, their efforts to unite the country proved fruitless. The entrance of the Communist guerrilla forces made the job of winning over the countryside virtually impossible. Six basic characteristics of the preconflict Vietnamese political system contributed to the outbreak of widespread military fighting after 1959:

a. Inadequate political leadership. Vietnam had been ruled by the French for some 70 years prior to 1945. The native Vietnamese were permitted to participate in the Government only at the lowest levels. Coupled with the Communist policy of assassination and terrorism, this lack of participation left the country bereft of any able political or civil leaders. The capable leaders were members of the elite class and often were unaware or disdainful of the peasant class.

b. Lack of specific planning for independence. The French did not leave Vietnam freely; they were forced out by military defeats and domestic turmoil in France. They, therefore, made little or no effort to facilitate the independence of Vietnam. Following their precipitous departure after the defeat at Dien Bien Phu and the Geneva Accords, the independent state of Vietnam began to founder because of this lack of advance planning.

c. Alienation of the people from the Government. The Vietnamese people inherited a strong sense of tradition with their Confucian heritage. Both the governments of Bao Dai and Ngo Dinh Diem seemed to lack the legitimacy of tradition necessary to win the minds and hearts of the Vietnamese people.

d. General lack of confidence in the Government. Both Bao Dai and Diem suffered from this general lack of confidence. The attitude was that Communist victory was imminent; hence, there was no good reason to support the Government or begin programs designed to bolster it.

e. Unresponsive political system. The political system itself, centered as it was around a strong chief executive, was unresponsive to the needs of Vietnam. The legislatures were mere rubber stamps, and the cabinets were responsible only to the chief executive. President Diem, especially, was able to control dissent and dissatisfaction through his control of the police and the military.

f. Strong polarization of antipathetic ideologies. There was polarization not only between the Communists of the north and the Western-oriented southerners but also between the Catholics and the Buddhists and among the three regions of Vietnam--Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin China.

3. Economic factors.

a. In light of all the other problems faced by the Republic of South Vietnam, it is somewhat surprising that there was not more difficulty with the economy than there was. This was because of two main factors. Eighty-five percent of the people were peasants who were relatively content with their place in life; and massive amounts of US aid enabled them to maintain their standard of living.

b. Throughout the entire period, the country faced runaway inflation and widespread deprivation. Failure of several Government plans stopped the economy from developing to a point where it would be independent of US aid, and the lack of general confidence in the Government inhibited the investment of money in capital goods and expansion of existing facilities.

c. Four economic factors are generally conceded to have contributed to the outbreak of violence:

(1) Failure to convert from a rice economy to a balanced economy. The greatest problem faced by the Vietnamese was the modernization of their economy. For several reasons they were unable to do

this; two of the most important were that they were in the midst of a guerrilla-type war, and there was little confidence in the Government.

(2) Republic of Vietnam (RVN) Government dependence on US aid. The Government needed massive foreign aid if it was ever to achieve anything resembling economic independence. The United States supplied the necessary aid willingly. Diem and his advisers misused this aid, however, by turning it into consumer goods which, while pacifying the populace, did nothing to stabilize the economy or make the country economically independent.

(3) Inflation. Although Diem did have some success in curbing the runaway inflation he faced on assuming office, the specter of such a disaster always was present and proved an inhibiting factor in Government planning.

(4) Damage to the economic infrastructure. Much of the economic infrastructure had been destroyed or allowed to disseminate during World War II and the subsequent internal turmoil. Although Diem was able to restore this aspect of the economy, it was the one thing that rebels would strike first--it remained a cankerous problem throughout the preconflict period.

4. Sociological factors.

a. The sociological life of a typical Vietnamese peasant was centered around his family and, by extension, the village. Contact with the outside world was discouraged. Most of the peasants knew nothing of the 20th century world. There was a growing middle class during this period, although it was still only a fraction of the population. The upper and elite classes continued to govern Vietnam as a nation. Their decisions and policies had little effect on the average citizen other than to inconvenience him.

b. Vietnam was in many ways a divided nation. The native Vietnamese distrusted and feared the minority ethnic groups in the country and were wary of any white foreigners. Strong regional differences existed between the inhabitants of Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin China. Class antagonisms, while held in check by Confucian tradition, were latent and held a huge potential for possible disruption. Religious tolerance was unheard of, and differences raged between the religious sects of the country.

c. The following five sociological factors led the list of those which contributed to violence in Vietnam:

(1) Confucian traditionalism. The traditional Confucian philosophy, based as it was on fatalism and love of family, often led the

illiterate unsophisticated peasants into apathy. In the middle, upper, and elite classes it most frequently found expression in graft and other misdealings. There was little interest in Government except among members of the elite.

(2) Breakdown of the traditional family village system. Years of war and their uprootings of peasants; destruction of villages, graveyards, shrines, and temples; and general chaos had done much to disturb and disrupt the sociological heritage of the Vietnamese people. They often become people witnout a past, and, consequently, people without a future.

(3) Strong regional differences. The antagonisms felt by the Annamites, Tonkinese, and Cochin Chinese prohibited their functioning together as a nation.

(4) Class antagonisms. Like the regional differences, the latent class antagonisms did not directly lead to violence but, rather, made it extremely difficult to form the nation necessary to ward off the violence.

(5) Widespread lack of public health and educational facilities. The Vietnamese peasant did not feel the lack of health and education facilities directly, but the insurgents were able to hold them up as benefits that would accrue with the success of the revolution, and thus, made the realinement of the peasants less difficult.

5. Military factors.

a. The military forces, along with their counterparts in the police and the security forces, were ill-suited for the burden of defending the homeland against the attacks of a well-trained, dedicated army. When Diem assumed control of the State, he found the military forces to be ill-equipped, ill-trained, and with a serious morale problem. The police and security forces were divided into several competing groups, all of which also suffered from a lack of training and equipment.

b. President Diem immediately began to reassign and reorganize his forces with the aid of the US Military Assistance Advisory Group (USMAAG). They quickly began to show vast improvement, but Diem made two basic errors which negated any gains the military forces might have expected. First he used the Army and the police as a personal tool, putting down not only Communist disruption but also any disagreement of loyal countrymen with his policies. Secondly, he tried to direct the strategy and tactics of his security forces, although he was untrained in any aspect of this field. This governmental interference often resulted in military disaster.

c. The following were three of the most important military factors leading to the outbreak of violence:

(1) Insufficient police and security forces. These troops were untrained and underequipped, their leaders were divided as to what their tactics and strategy should be, and their brutal methods alienated the people.

(2) Ill-equipped and undertrained military. With the departure of the French, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) was equipped with pre-World War II weapons, had almost no mobility, and had few, if any, officers who had commanded a body of men as large as a battalion.

(3) The enemy. An important fact in analyzing the failure of the ARVN to pacify the countryside was the fact that it was facing a dedicated well-trained, well-equipped enemy and not simply a band of scattered irregulars. The enemy forces were essentially the same race as the Army and fought a guerrilla war which enabled them to disappear into the countryside before the ARVN could catch them.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

6. Nature of the study.

a. This document is a case study of the political, economic, sociological, psychological, scientific-technological, and military aspects of Vietnam prior to the outbreak of low intensity conflict and loss of Government control in 1959. It is one of seven substudies of representative nations conducted to determine the factors that lead to low intensity conflict. The years 1945-59 were selected for examination of the preconflict period. Definitions, assumptions, and methodology which are common to all the substudies are described in the main report.

b. Data were drawn from an exhaustive perusal of published and unpublished sources and, where possible, were checked for validity against classified Government sources. In addition, the expertise of US Army War College students who had served in Vietnam was used. The results of the examination and analysis are summarized in this chapter and presented in more detail in the following chapters.

7. Background and history.

a. Vietnam often has been described as a carrying pole with a rice basket at each end. Stretching for 1,200 miles along the easternmost shore of the Indochinese Peninsula in Southeast Asia, Vietnam is bordered by Communist China on the north, Laos and Cambodia on the west, the China Sea to the south and southeast, and the Gulf of Tonkin to the east. It covers an area of about 127,300 square miles.

(1) The land mass is divided into three well-defined features: the central highlands, the narrow coastal plain, and the deltas. The central highland makes up two-thirds of Vietnam and consists of sharp slopes and dense jungles inhabited mainly by aboriginal and nomadic tribes. The coastal plain, generally less than 25 miles wide, runs the length of Vietnam. Washed by the waters of the South China Sea, the area is level, densely populated, and intensely cultivated. The main deltas in southern Vietnam are dominated by five branches of the Mekong and three other rivers. The area is marshy and flat, and it serves as the main rice growing sector of Vietnam.

(2) Climate and weather are governed by "monsoon Asia." The climate can be generally characterized as consisting of moderately high temperatures, high humidity, and a high percentage of cloudy, overcast days.

(3) Saigon and Hanoi, the capitals of South and North Vietnam, respectively, are the principal cities. Other large and important cities include Hue, Haiphong, Da Lat, Dong Hoi, Nam Dinh, Da Nang, and Nha Trang. Nearly 85 percent of Vietnam's 38 million people lives in rural areas.

b. The recorded history of the Vietnamese people goes back 2,000 years to a time when they were a part of China. After throwing off the yoke of Chinese domination in A.D. 938, Vietnam remained independent under an emperor until conquered by the French in the 1880's.

(1) Vietnam traditionally had had a Chinese mandarin or warlord type of Government. When the French assumed control, they permitted retention of some of the mandarin titles, but they ruled through the standard French colonial system with a Governor General and provincial chiefs. They administered Vietnam as a colony, with only a brief interruption during World War II. After World War II, the French attempted to inaugurate a workable Vietnamese Government under a monarchy similar to the mandarin system. In 1945, Ho Chi Minh, the Communist leader, seized control of the north and instituted the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV). The French continued to administer the southern part until 1954, when Ngo Dinh Diem gained control of the Government there. In a national referendum in the south, held in 1955, the people of the south opted for an independent republic, the Republic of Vietnam (RVN).

(2) Conditions were extremely unstable after the establishment of these two rival Governments. Neither was satisfied with the terms of the separation, and each considered itself to be the rightful Government of Vietnam. Civil war was imminent, and there was a massive infiltration of guerrillas from the north whose dual task was to stir the people of the south against their Government and to disrupt normal Government operations. A chronology of major political events of the preconflict period appears in table II.

c. During the preconflict stage, Vietnam experienced three forms of Government: the French Colonial System, in which the Vietnamese were allowed little or no voice; the Empire, under Bao Dai, in which the Vietnamese had only nominal control; and the Republic under Ngo Dinh Diem, in which the Vietnamese ran the Government with the advice and aid of France and the United States.

(1) Although nominally a republic, the Government under Diem created a totalitarian State. Diem ruled by decree, the legislature was simply a rubber stamp for his policies, and the cabinet was responsible directly to Diem.

(2) Administratively, the country was divided into regions, provinces, districts, villages, and hamlets, in descending order. When

Diem was in power, nearly all the positions of authority in this hierarchy were held by men loyal to him.

d. Before the partition in 1954, Vietnam had a balanced economy: the north was industrialized with little agriculture; the south was agricultural with little industry. Since partition, the main efforts of both the DRV and the RVN have been to improve those economic areas in which their country was weak.

(1) Faced with inflation, a massive influx of refugees from the north, and disruption of the agricultural and marketing processes caused by constant internal instability, the Government of South Vietnam needed huge amounts of foreign aid to right the economy. The United States became the main source for this aid, although some UN committees and a few other countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, also participated.

(2) Effort and money were at first poured into agriculture, and the results were impressively spectacular. During the first 5 years of his administration, Diem was able to begin extensive programs of relocation of the population and redistribution of the land, to repair and extend the economic infrastructure, and to achieve enough political stability for the economy to begin an upward surge.

(3) Efforts to rebuild and modernize the industrial economy of South Vietnam were by no means as successful, because of the Government's inability or unwillingness to encourage or foster private and public investment in the economy. Concentration in importing consumer goods to support the Vietnamese standard of living and dependence on the massive US aid program created a false economy.

e. Vietnamese foreign relations fall into two categories and only rarely coincide. Neither North nor South Vietnam recognizes the other as a legitimate Government. North Vietnam carries on diplomatic relations with most of the Communist countries, and South Vietnam with most of the free world. In its relations with the United States, South Vietnam has played several different roles. At times it has been aggressive; at other times, acquiescent. In sum, though, the US-Vietnamese relations have been good.

8. Political factors. Vietnam receives much of its strategic importance from its position on the eastern shore of the Indochinese Peninsula. Attempts to open trade with Vietnam were made as early as the 18th century, but France was the only colonial power to make successful inroads on the distrustful countries of the peninsula. On arrival, the French found Vietnam governed by a variation of the Chinese mandarin system. When they succeeded in conquering Indochina, they divided the area into five regions: Laos, Cambodia, Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin China. The last three regions correspond roughly to the area known today as

Vietnam. In Tonkin (the northernmost section of Vietnam) and Annam (the middle section), the French maintained most elements of the mandarin system under the aegis of the French Governor General. In the south, or Cochin China, the French instituted a standard colonial system, while maintaining some of the traditional mandarin titles. The Vietnamese were permitted almost no participation in the Government of their country and were integrated into the military, the police, the economy, or the administration only at the lowest levels. Dissatisfaction with the system led to several outbreaks of nationalism, which were quickly and easily quelled by the French. When France fell to Germany during World War II, the Vichy colonial Government negotiated an agreement with the Japanese which allowed the Japanese to station troops throughout Indochina while the French retained administrative control of the area. Toward the end of the War, when it became apparent to the Japanese that the War would end either in a stalemate or in an Allied victory, they seized control of the area, imprisoned the French, and began releasing and arming Vietnamese Nationals. The theory behind this action was that even if Japan lost the War, the area would not revert to the Allies. To facilitate the independence of Vietnam, the Japanese established a Government under a conservative nationalist, Bao Dai. This Government failed to rally popular support, however, and resigned quietly when the Japanese surrendered. Eventually, in the vacuum created after the defeat of the Japanese and before the arrival in force of the Allies, the Communists under Ho Chi Minh were able to gain temporary control of most of Vietnam and establish the first independent Government of Vietnam since 1880. They were undermanned and underequipped, however, and the French, with British and Nationalist Chinese aid, were able to reestablish control quickly in the south.

a. The French knew that neither the Indochinese people nor world opinion would tolerate reinstitution of the stringent colonial systems they had imposed before the War. After establishing a semblance of political and military stability in the area, the French began searching for a native Vietnamese political figure behind whom they could unite the country but would be malleable enough to allow the French to retain control. They could find only two political leaders of any stature: Ho Chi Minh, a violently anti-French doctrinaire Communist, and Bao Dai, the conservative Annamese Emperor who had failed to rally popular support as a puppet for the Japanese. The Communists continued to carry on a guerrilla type of action in the south after the French reestablished control. In the north, where most of the Communist strength lay, the French control was extremely tenuous. The French established a Provisional Advisory Council with four French and eight Vietnamese members to ease the transition back into the French Colonial system. On 1 July 1949, after protracted negotiations and in the midst of sporadic guerrilla warfare with the Communists, the State of Vietnam became a reality as a member of the French Union of Indochina. Bao Dai was appointed Chief of State.

(1) The purpose behind the French establishment of the State of Vietnam was quite simple. It was hoped that such an action would quell the nascent nationalism, while allowing the French to retain full administrative control. An executive office under Bao Dai was formed, but it had no major powers. A judiciary was established, but the judges were either native or naturalized French, using French legal codes, which often were irreconcilable with the Vietnamese way of life. A legislative branch never was established. Although the Constitution contained strong guarantees of civil liberties for the Vietnamese, the French retained administrative control of the economic, military, diplomatic, and, most importantly, the police sectors of the Vietnamese Government and remained in full control.

(2) During this period, the civil service also was dominated by the French, and very few Vietnamese were allowed to reach the upper levels of public service. Lack of education, both formal and on-the-job, crippled the efficiency of the indigenous civil service. When the French began turning over the administration to the Vietnamese in 1950, the system began to founder. A significant step toward improvement of this situation was taken in 1953 with the founding of the National Institute of Administration to train civil servants.

(3) 1954 was a pivotal year for Vietnam: Ngo Dinh Diem returned to politics after an absence of 20 years, and the Geneva Accords were signed. Diem, who became Prime Minister on 4 June 1954, was a French-educated Catholic who held strongly nationalistic views. On 19 June 1954, Diem received dictatorial powers from Bao Dai which were partially justified. The Government Diem inherited suffered from inefficient administration, an unreliable Army, widespread corruption, and feudal dissension. The Geneva conference (annex I) had been convened at the request of both the East and the West to find an equitable solution to problems of both Indochina and Korea. During the conference, the Government of France fell and was replaced by a new administration whose immediate goal was a cessation of French military action in Indochina. On 21 July 1954, the conference recommended that Vietnam be divided at the 17th parallel, that hostilities cease, and that a countrywide referendum be held by 20 July 1956 to settle the issue of reunification. For various reasons, neither South Vietnam nor the United States signed the Accords.

(4) To consolidate his power and oust Bao Dai, Diem held a referendum to decide whether Vietnam would be ruled by a monarchy or a republic. Diem won a massive victory in an election that most experts labeled fraudulent, and the Republic of Vietnam came into existence. Diem then called a convention to ratify a Constitution establishing a legislature, an executive branch, and a judiciary. While the Constitution contained strong guarantees of civil liberties, all real power resided in the executive branch. Diem ruled the legislature by controlling all the political parties through the Can Lao, a small cadre of

devoted workers who sometimes used extortion and terrorism. He relied mainly on his inner family for support and advice in ruling the country. His sister-in-law, Madam Ngo Dinh Nhy, and his brothers, Ngo Dinh Nhu and Ngo Dinh Can, constituted an invisible Government. Nguyen Ngoc Tho, the Vice-President who was appointed in 1956, also enjoyed the President's confidence. Dr. Tran Kim Tuyen headed the Office of the President (which controlled many political, economic, and military affairs and, most importantly, the secret police) and was a presidential adviser.

(5) Ngo Dinh Diem ruled as an absolute dictator, never letting the reins of Government slip from his reach. All the Ministries were responsible directly to him and he often became personally involved as far down as the district level. The legislature was little more than a rubber stamp, and there was little change in the shape of local Government. Diem instituted several changes in the civil service. He transferred control of the civil service to the Office of the President, placed Army officers as District and Province Chiefs, and brought people from the northern and central parts of South Vietnam into leading positions in the civil service. Such tight control of the civil service stifled its growth and development, and it continued to deteriorate.

b. Political parties in the Western sense of loyal oppositionists did not exist in Vietnam during this period; neither the French nor Ngo Dinh Diem allowed any legal opposition to their policies. The two nominal parties in the legislature both supported Diem. There were, however, several underground opposition groups. The Viet Minh was a Communist group who had remained underground in the south when the rest of the Communists fled to the north. The Vietnamese Nationalist Party (VNQDD) was both anti-Communist and anti-Diem. The Vietnamese Revolutionary League or Dong Ming Hoi (DMH), was made up of diverse nationalist elements exiled in China during the War. The minority religions also comprised highly vocal interest groups. The Roman Catholics were relatively quiet under Diem, who was himself an ardent Catholic, but they were quick to protest when they felt their interests threatened. The Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao, quasi-politicoreligious groups, were both vocal and militant in defense of their rights. They maintained standing militias of their own and were virtually autonomous in their own areas. The Binh Xuyen was a bandit horde, operating around Saigon, that exercised great political control before Diem was able to destroy them.

c. The Communist Party was well established in Indochina as early as the 1930's, and the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) was the focal point of opposition to the invading Japanese in 1940. The ICP Control Committee met in 1941 and elected Ho Chi Minh General Secretary of the Vietnamese Independence Party, or Viet Minh. The Viet Minh, predecessor of today's Viet Cong, was dedicated to defeat of the Japanese and the French. As in most countries, the Communists gained most of their strength from the disaffected liberal intellectual class and the easily maneuvered impoverished peasantry. When they were displaced by the returning Allies, most of the Communists fled to secure hamlets in the

north, leaving behind a cadre of Viet Minh and large caches of arms and munitions.

d. There is no history of political freedom or democracy in Vietnam. In fact, the peasant class fear the democratic process because of its all-or-nothing nature and its failure to allow for the Oriental tradition of "face." By and large, the people tend to be apolitical. Only the elite class thinks of itself as able or destined to rule, and the other classes do little to dispute this notion.

(1) The peasants and the middle class have a strong tradition of Confucianism. They, therefore, are fatalistic (man has one place in the universe) almost to the point of apathy. The family is the single most important social grouping. Families to the third and fourth generation live together under the same roof. Villages generally are made up of related families. A peasant will display only minor interest in events outside the family, and no interest outside the village. Contact with the Government is almost nil.

(2) Strong regional differences also existed among the northern, central, and southern Vietnamese. The northerners thought of themselves as progressive; the southern and the central Vietnamese considered the northerners aggressive and pushy. The Annamite from central Vietnam thought himself the true inheritor of the Vietnamese culture; people from Tonkin or Cochin China thought the Annamites were snobs and hypocrites. The southerner believed that he was the only Vietnamese truly in tune with nature; the others considered him to be a lazy dirt farmer. All Vietnamese were slightly xenophobic, although few were nationalistic. The peasants especially were able to temper their rigid Confucianism with strains of pragmatism as a result of their experiences during some 15 years of nearly constant internal turmoil.

(3) When the French left, there was a serious lack of trained Government administrators available. Those who had any experience at all usually were northern Vietnamese who had fled the Communists. Diem lost no time in installing these people in office, although it severely alienated his administration from the people of the south.

e. The United National Front was an uneasy alliance of political parties and interest groups which engaged in a power struggle instead of unifying their efforts. The Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao were autonomous and had their own separate militias. The Viet Minh used its extensive guerrilla troops and terrorist tactics to try to destroy the other anti-French groups which it should have been attempting to lead. The several political organizations engaged in open armed conflict among themselves, and the Viet Minh rapidly succeeded in alienating the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao. This disunity was so pronounced by the beginning of 1947 that the French encountered only scattered pockets of resistance in the south to their campaign to retake that area.

f. Control of Vietnam was important to the French, but control of Cochin China specifically was most important, for 60 percent of France's investment was in that part of Vietnam. Attempts at negotiation with Ho Chi Minh prior to the 6 March agreements were uncoordinated and undiplomatic, and the Da Lat and Fantainebleau conferences which led to those agreements only added fuel to the fire of anticolonialism. Admiral d'Angenlieu's open antagonism toward complying with the 6 March agreements and his premature and unauthorized recognition of Cochin China as a separate republic (Republic of Cochin China) in June 1946 closed the door to further negotiation with Ho Chi Minh.

g. The seeds of the Indochinese War had been planted, and the agreements were violated repeatedly. The igniting spark was the Haiphong incident: shooting broke out in Haiphong in November 1946; the Viet Minh opened fire on 20 November on a French ship anchored in the harbor and attacked a French burial detail 2 days later; the French delivered an ultimatum to the Viet Minh forces giving them 2 hours to evacuate the Chinese quarter of the city. The ensuing bombardment by a French heavy cruiser reportedly killed 6,000 Vietnamese. An uneasy truce was established, but subsequent French demands were so unacceptable to the DRV that Ho and his advisers chose to investigate a war of liberation, regardless of the attendant risks. The Viet Minh blew up the Hanoi power plant and attacked all French garrisons on 19 December 1946, ending a year of independence and starting the 8-year Indochinese War.

9. Economic factors. Vietnam had a balanced economy as a French colony. The north was heavily industrial with little agricultural development, while the south was heavily agricultural and had only a smattering of village industry and no heavy industry. The French manipulated the Vietnamese economy solely for the benefit of metropolitan France. They improved and extended the economic infrastructure but made no effort to train a native managerial class, to make improvements in the field of public health, or to improve the agriculture by using more advanced technology and developing native technicians.

a. Three factors combined by 1954 to cause economic chaos in South Vietnam: 12 years of war and internal strife, previous lack of development, and partition from the north. The fighting had caused much loss of life and skilled labor, the communications network had been virtually destroyed, and the land itself had severely deteriorated. Before World War II, Vietnam had an efficient highway system of paved and unpaved roads of some 12,000 km. By 1954, however, the paved roads were nearly all unusable because of interdiction tactics, weathering, and lack of maintenance, and the others were passable only in the dry season. The railroads had suffered the same deterioration and destruction as the highways. The internal waterways and manmade canals were largely impassable because of the silt that had been allowed to collect in them over the years.

b. South Vietnam was an agricultural nation, and it was here that Diem made his first fruitful efforts towards rebuilding the Vietnamese economy. Land development and agrarian reform had top priority in the Government's overall effort. Planning, preparation, and implementation of the reform program began in selected areas early in 1957. The land development program was a joint undertaking by the RVN and the US Operations Mission (USOM), with the United States providing monetary and technical assistance. Difficulties arose, however, over where to implement this program first. The United States felt it should begin in the Delta area, around the capital Saigon, while Diem and his advisers wished to start in the less accessible central highlands. When the Government refused to submit to US desires, the USOM withdrew all monetary support from the program, although it continued to give technical advice. Despite USOM's withdrawal, the land development programs were impressively successful: 125,000 persons had been resettled, 22,000 new homes had been build, and 48,000 hectares of land had been cleared by mid-1959, only 2 years after the program had begun.

(1) The Government also began a program to relieve the tenant farmers of the burdensome rental and interest fees they had been paying to the landlords. Two ordinances promulgated in early 1955 cut the rentals in half (12 to 25 percent of the principal crop versus 50 percent), limited interest on production loans to 12 percent a year, provided penalties for abuse, established local committees to arbitrate landlord-tenant disputes, and assured better administration of contracts and leases. Having thus relieved some of the pressing problems of the peasants, Diem tackled the problem of land distribution. A program put into effect in 1956 prohibited anyone from owning and cultivating more than 30 hectares for himself. If he owned the maximum allowed of 100 hectares, he still could cultivate only 30 and must rent the other 70 hectares or sell them. The Government also appropriated 245,000 hectares of French holdings for redistribution among the landless. These actions made 695,000 hectares of land available for distribution.

(2) Diem also took steps to ease the production-marketing cycle for the small farmers. In April 1957, the RVN established the National Agricultural Credit Office (NACO), which was widely decentralized at the local level with a strong coordinator at top. By 30 September 1959, US$46 million had been lent, and production loans had permitted about 570,000 farmers to cultivate nearly 3.9 million acres of land. The RVN also laid down provisions for cooperative associations. Wisely, the ordinances that provided the basis for these associations assured open membership, democratic management and control, rebate of any surplus to members according to the extent of their transactions, and limited interest on capital. By 1961, there were 348 of these cooperatives in Vietnam with 79,000 members and capital of $10 million. These were diversified as follows: 142 agriculture, 6 forestry, 4 breeding, 80 fishery, 104 handicrafts, and 12 consumer.

(3) Fiber production was introduced early in the program and was expected to fill 100 percent of the domestic need by the end of 1960 and to enter the export market soon thereafter. Sugar production rose to 14 percent of the domestic needs in 1959 and was expected to provide 90 percent by 1965. Production of corn, soybeans, sweet potatoes, and peanuts was most encouraging, and cocoa appeared to be a promising export commodity. Great strides also were made in livestock production and animal husbandry. By June 1957, 10 poultry, four swine, and four cattle experimental stations were operating with impressive results.

(4) Great strides also were made in rebuilding the economic infrastructure during this period. More than $13 million worth of construction equipment had been imported to support the rebuilding task. Substantial improvement had been made on the roads, and they were expected to be completed by May 1961. By the end of fiscal 1961, 1,337 km of the original railroad system were operable. During fiscal years 1958 and 1959, 5.5 million cubic meters of fill were dredged from the nation's canals, and large portions of the inland waterway systems were opened between 1957 and 1960 for the first time in 12 years.

c. Progress in development of a solid industrial base in South Vietnam was not encouraging, however. When they had first taken over the Government, Diem and his advisers had had to decide whether the limited industrial resources should be directed toward industrial or agricultural development. The Government chose agriculture, because nearly [illegible] percent of its population lived in agricultural villages, and the country had almost no industrial or manufacturing base. Substantial industrial development was necessary, however, if Vietnam were to approach anything near economic independence. There was a sizable labor force in both rural and urban areas that was either unemployed or underemployed. Although the crash programs initiated soon after Diem took office were somewhat successful and did save the country from further economic collapse, there was no real long-range plan for industrial development. Internal instability and the misdirection of the Government caused Diem and his advisers to channel most of the US aid funds into consumer goods (to the detriment of some of the local industries) or idle resources, instead of into capital goods and working resources. Businessmen and Government leaders preferred to hoard rather than to expand. The Government failed to institute such economic control measures as an effective tax system, investment, and a savings program to build a sound economy. They continued to look upon US aid as a relief rather than as a stimulus to economic growth. Massive US aid, in effect, created a false economy. Although the Gross National Product grew 24 percent during this period and per capita consumption showed a modest growth, no great growth potential was realized because the Government failed to take a strong initiative. At the end of the preconflict period, the Government of the RVN still had not solved these problems.

10. Sociological factors.

a. Demography. North Vietnam's 1968 population was estimated by the UN to be 20.7 million: an average density of 337.7 per square mile. This figure is unrealistic, because the mountainous regions are sparsely settled, and the coastal plains and several of the larger cities are densely populated. South Vietnam's 1967 population was estimated to be 17.4 million, or 259.5 people per square mile. This average also is unrealistic, for most of South Vietnam is uninhabitable jungle and mountain terrain. Large numbers of people are found only in the deltas and on the coastal plains.

(1) The South Vietnamese are an overwhelmingly rural people: 80-85 percent of the people make their livelihood in farming or in small villages. There has been a slight change in this figure in recent years as the constant instability and danger in the countryside have caused people to migrate to the relatively greater security of the larger cities. Saigon, for example, more than tripled in size between 1955 and 1965. There is evidence that a majority of these people will return to the countryside with the cessation of hostilities.

(2) Unemployment and underemployment are rife both in rural and urban South Vietnam. This is traceable to lack of industrial training as well as the severe disruption of rural life.

b. Ethnic groups. There are four major ethnic groups: Chinese, Montagnards (mountain people), Chams, and Khmers (Cambodians). The country is overwhelmingly Buddhist, with three vocal minority religions: Roman Catholics, Hoa Hao, and Cao Dai. The Vietnamese are a Mongoloid people, not dissimilar from the Chinese. Many of their cultural and social values are similar to those of the Chinese because of their common Confucian heritage. There are both cultural and social differences between the peoples of the three regions of Vietnam; they tend to be distrustful and antagonistic toward one another. The Chinese constitute the most important minority ethnic groups in Vietnam. They are the entrepreneurs, the money lenders, the merchants, and the investors. Chinese culture is both respected and feared as the source of the Vietnamese culture, but the Chinese themselves are looked down on as greedy and grasping. The Montagnards are nomadic hunters who inhabit the wilds of the central highlands. The Vietnamese consider the Montagnards to be barbarians, and all efforts to integrate them into the Vietnamese culture have been highly unsuccessful. The other two major ethnic groups, the Khmers and the Chams, are relatively small in numbers. The Khmers are Cambodians who found themselves in Vietnam after the rather arbitrary partition of Indochina. The Chams are descendants of the Kingdom of Campa in cultural Annam, which was nearly annihilated by the Vietnamese on their march south from China.

c. Cultural values. The culture of Vietnam had its beginning in ancient Confucianism. Basically there are three main cultural values that every Vietnamese, peasant or elite, esteems.

(1) Strong family ties are part of the Confucian philosophy based on respect for and admiration of one's elders. The family is patrilinear, although the family is not excluded from the decision-making process. Families tend to live together to the third and fourth generation. Related families group together in hamlets, and the oldest member is considered the patriarch. A council of elders is chosen to lead the community, and among its responsibilities are maintenance of the ancestral burial ground and care of the village spirit. The Vietnamese is interested primarily in matters of the family; secondly, in matters of the hamlet or village.

(2) Acceptance of one's fate is another important aspect of Vietnamese culture. Everything has its origin in what has gone before. If a man is a peasant, he should be a peasant. A king or a Government gets its legitimacy from antiquity, and every village has an ancient scroll establishing its legitimacy. The Governments of Bao Dai, Diem, and those that followed had a great deal of difficulty establishing their legitimacy, or their link to the past, and a consequent difficulty in rallying popular support. A sidelight to this fatalism is a great interest in the occult. Geomancy, astrology, and numerology play a large part in the everyday dealings of the people.

(3) The importance of maintaining face also influences the cultural life of the Vietnamese. One never places his opponent in an untenable position; compromise is better than all-out victory. This tends to explain the general Vietnamese apathy toward both the electoral process and the ideological struggle between the Communists of the north and the Democrats of the south.

d. Class structure. There are four social classes in Vietnam--the elite, upper, middle, and lower classes--and class is by no means atrophied. Mobility upward and downward is possible to a certain extent. The most important factor in social mobility is education, a commodity that is rather hard to attain in Vietnam. Political power, however, is maintained by those who are able to prepare their descendants for assumption of such power. This preparation is accomplished mainly by acquiring a Western education and is available to only 10-15 percent of the elite and upper class families.

(1) The elite and upper class are almost exclusively city dwellers. The small elite is composed of extremely wealthy families, landowners, hereditary nobility, and the highest Government officials. The upper class is made up of professional men, high-ranking Armed Forces officers, rich merchants, educators and scientists, engineers,

and high Government and civil officials. The elite and upper classes share a semi-Western outlook and way of life.

(2) The middle class includes essentially anyone not in the upper class or the elite whose profession does not entail manual labor. There is considerable movement into and out of this class. Again, this is for the most part an essentially urban class, although farm managers, clerics, and district and province officials are included.

(3) The lower class includes the peasantry and manual laborers, whose attitudes are mainly traditional and who are mostly illiterate and superstitious. The urban worker usually is only a generation away from the farm, and separation from the traditional village organization and rituals creates a sort of "marginal man" with few loyalties beyond his immediate family.

e. Public health. Medical practicing in Vietnam can be divided into two classes, both deeply rooted in history and culture, and both closely related.

(1) Healers/sorcerers are practitioners who supposedly receive special powers from their patron deity, especially the power to mete and exercise evil spirits. Probably the most widespread prevention techniques are rituals aimed at avoiding ill health, either by requesting a deity's protection or by propitiating an evil or errant spirit. Even before the arrival of the French, though, there were Vietnamese who dismissed this spirit theory of medicine and its practitioners. These men were called "Chinese doctors" and used herbs and drugs in methods of treatment developed by the Chinese through thousands of years of experimentation and experience.

(2) Health is the affair of the family and, on a larger scale, the village. Even the "Chinese doctors" are either village scholars practicing medicine on the side or professional practitioners who maintain shops in the marketplace. Villagers are aware of the need for a proper diet and consume certain foods, such as red peppers and betel nuts, to preserve good health. Should traditional therapy prove of no avail, some families try Western medicine, although they remain skeptical of it and its high cost is an inhibiting factor.

(3) The healer operates under more favorable conditions than those of the physician. He is able to impress the patient with concrete results and apparent success since he is treating folk illnesses, the symptoms of which are so ill-defined that he cannot help but alleviate them. The magic rituals and amulets used in treatment and the dependence on cosmology, geomancy, and numerology all appeal to the peasant more than the sterile, diagnostic techniques of the physician. The tendency among the peasants is to exhaust all their home remedies and the healer's knowledge before consulting a physician, often arriving when the illness

no longer can be cured. The physician also tends to look down on the healer, while the healer treats the doctor as an equal, thus giving the physician an air of waspish stuffiness unpopular with the patients.

(4) The Vietnamese became accustomed to Western-trained Vietnamese doctors under the French Government. A National Board of Health was established in 1951 as a consultative body to improve public health. The Department of Public Health was established in 1954 and charged with the direction of hospitals, health protection, and public sanitation. The Government began a program of public health treatment and education, fully utilizing the still scarce medical and hospital facilities. The Health Department instituted a plan for extension of maternal and child health services, with considerable assistance from WHO and UNICEF. Actions also were taken to improve the public sanitation of the country and to halt the spread of contagious diseases.

(5) During the period from 1959 to 1964, the Department concentrated on bettering the hospital system and providing more trained personnel, although the normal development of these health services was somewhat hampered by internal unrest. The administration of the health services was divided into regional, provincial, and local levels. At the village level, there were 3,453 health stations staffed by workers whose training, though minimal, allowed them to treat certain illnesses and to refer others to the district health centers which were designed and staffed to provide a greater degree of medical care. Hospitals were established at the province level. Special units were established to control communicable diseases; to improve the nutrition of the peasants and hospital patients; to treat cardiovascular and degenerative diseases; to improve environmental conditions; to treat psychiatric and psychological disorders; and to conduct medical research in such areas as urology, hydrology, and entomology. Work in the field of veterinary medicine also progressed within the Department of Agriculture under the Directorate of Animal Husbandry.

11. Military factors. The Vietnamese are an aggressive people, and the French had enlisted them in their Armed Forces for years, although the natives seldom were given positions of authority. It was not until 1950 that impetus was given to the creation of the native Army, but even then most units were commanded by French officers. Many Vietnamese officers were attracted to the nationalistic Communists and Ho Chi Minh during this period because of the intransigent French attitude. After the defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu and the subsequent withdrawal of French forces, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) was in a confused state. It was underequipped, undertrained, and faced an aggressive well-trained enemy.

a. Army. In 1955, when the United States began its intensive effort to maintain the freedom of South Vietnam, the picture was gloomy. Under the French, the ARVN was a loosely organized military establishment

of battalion-size units. They were used in strategic positions as security forces or were given the role of further pacification in areas which ostensibly were free from Communist domination. There was no centralized tactical headquarters; schools and training centers were not used to capacity and lacked uniformity in training and equipment, and few, if any, ARVN officers had commanded a regiment.

(1) The US advisory effort in 1955 was directed toward establishment and training of division-size units. The Army was reduced from 200,000 to 150,000, and paramilitary forces were disbanded. The military forces were to be transformed from an antiguerrilla to a conventional force with a conventional organization, and a line, a staff, and a tactical command and control headquarters were to be established. A Command and General Staff course was created in 1956 to relieve further the paucity of trained officers. Other technical schools, such as the Armed Forces Language School (to teach English to the Army) and a medical training center soon followed. The ARVN was to develop a field force of three corps, composed of 10 divisions and 31 regiments, with a proper use of combat and service support units. US military aid during this period exceeded $250 million per year.

(2) In spite of increased US aid and advisory efforts, the actions of the ARVN did little to improve the situation. The Americans felt that the delta area of Vietnam should get priority. For awhile it appeared that the ARVN would be able to regain control of this area, but lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Government and the military permitted the Viet Cong to regain control rapidly. The problem still was one of leadership, training, and morale. There was also a significant amount of dissension and confusion in the USMAAG which impaired its effectiveness.

(3) During the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem, the Army was used as a political tool. This did little to improve the image of the ARVN with the people. One of Diem's first acts was to create special military tribunals to enforce the law. He also filled many regional and district political posts with military officers, which had the dual effect of enforcing an unpopular Government of the people and depriving the Army of much-needed officers. Both Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu tried to dictate military strategy, although neither had any training as military tacticians. The highest members of the Government also tended to look down on the generals and military leaders. Diem tried to control the ARVN by promotions based on loyalty rather than ability, infiltration of informants, frequent banishments of officers of integrity and initiative, and complete domination of all strategy. These methods not only failed to give him complete control of the ARVN, but also created a badly compromised and diluted Army.

b. Internal security forces. In addition to the measures mentioned, the Government created the Self Defense Corps (SDC) in 1955 to use in a

local security role. After a start in which morale was high, spirit, efficiency, and mobility lagged. To provide it with some expertise, the SDC was attached to the Department of National Defense headed by regular officers who, unfortunately, were of the lowest caliber. This action was followed the next year by formation of the Civil Guard (CG), a paramilitary force with a mobile capability to operate in the area of recruitment as an antiguerrilla and anti-infiltration force. The CG was placed under the Interior Department, and there were essentially two military establishments competing for resources. The United States was not willing to support the CG at the expense of the Army and the former soon deteriorated.

c. Police. The village traditionally was the seat of power. The council of notables enforced the laws of the Government, mandarin or French colonial, and, as said by an old Vietnamese proverb, "The laws of the Emperor yield to the customs of the village." Violations of village autonomy led to political and social instability, as the French discovered when they tried to impose French legal procedures and law on the Vietnamese and sowed the seeds that were to destroy harmony in the family, village, and State. Ngo Dinh Diem continued this policy of virtual autonomy when he came to power, and it eventually led to his downfall.

(1) The French did not surrender control of the police force (trained to enforce French laws and systems and devoid of any trained Vietnamese administrators) to the Vietnamese until 1954. The Army was given police powers in unruly areas in 1955, and the police service was assigned internal security duties. Police responsibilities were split five ways: the civil guard, a 44,000-man force, formed to take over from the military when an area was pacified; the municipal police, charged with providing public security while actually performing general police duties; the national surete, a plainclothes force which dealt mainly with political security matters; the gendarmerie, a 753-man force which specialized in traffic and accident investigations in rural areas; and the rural police, which was divided into the village guard and the village police. These organizations were loosely affiliated, although two (gendarmerie, rural police) were assigned to the Minister of the Defense, two (civil guard, national surete) were assigned to the Minister of the Interior, and one (municipal police) was assigned to the individual provinces. Lack of training and coordination on a national level negated the advantage of numbers (between 63,000 and 115,000) of members in these forces.

(2) The main role for both the French and the Vietnamese police during the period was the control of terrorist activity by the Communist forces in the south which began as early as 1930. The murder of Government officials began in earnest in 1957, and acts of terrorism had reached epidemic proportion by 1960.

(3) When Diem assumed office in 1954, the main Viet Minh forces were ing withdrawn to the north. They left behind arms caches and thousa of secret agents and guerrilla bands. To compound the problem, muc. of the Army and police was controlled by a bandit horde, the Binh Xuyen. With US aid, Diem was able to gain control of the Army and police and to defeat the Binh Xuyen, then he tried to run the Army and the police personally at all levels. His interference in police matters led to inefficiency, and his personal appointment of almost all police officials stifled initiative and effectiveness. It was obvious by 1958 that the Civil Guard, which up to this time was charged with rural security, was incapable of accomplishing its task. Corruption and election frauds flourished. At one point, a former Binh Xuyen member was named Director General of the police. Police operations often were violent and brutal, further estranging them from the people. Equipment and training at all levels were poor. The police used bicycles for transportation until 1956. Communications were made on an erratic telephone system and no radio capability existed at the province level. The last 3 years of Diem's rule were characterized by the increasing restrictions placed on the people. Viet Cong infiltration increased Communist strength in the south from about 6,000 in 1957 to 34,000 in 1963 and perhaps 70,000-80,000 in 1964, although the level of conflict still was low and limited mainly to acts of terrorism and a few commando-type raids. It was not until 1963 that the national police, set up in 1962, actively began to counter infiltration through a series of static and mobile checkpoints. These were ineffective because of lack of coordination, qualified personnel, and poor enforcement. After 1963, the efficiency of these checkpoints gradually increased, although the frequent changes in Government following Diem's downfall tended to divert both attention and manpower from this task.

(4) At the behest of the US advisers in 1963, the police structure of Vietnam was reorganized. Rural police forces were abolished, and the national police organization was divided into seven major services. There have been no major changes in the organization of the Vietnamese police since 1963, but massive infusions of US aid have strengthened it in nearly all aspects.

CHAPTER 2

POLITICAL FACTORS

Section I. Government and Political System.

12. Background. Vietnam is an oriental nation, both in geographical location and in outlook. There is no such thing as a democratic heritage in Vietnam. The people tend to be apolitical and to look for leadership to those who have a "mandate" from the gods. Tradition and legitimacy are stronger stabilizing factors in the minds of the people than any guarantees of civil liberties.

a. Indochina was divided into five administrative districts (Laos, Cambodia, Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin China) by the French, with little or no regard for any racial or cultural traits that might have been present in a particular area. Hence, strong regional and social divisions exist throughout the area, especially among the Vietnamese who reside mainly in Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin China. Each group feels that its culture is the true descendant of the ancient Vietnamese cultur

b. Although Buddhism is the main religion, there are several local minority religions. All religions have a strong tradition of Confucianism, which was inbred in the Vietnamese during the period of Chinese domination. This Confucian heritage pervades every facet of Vietnamese life, fostering, among other things, ancestor worship, a high degree of fatalism, and a proclivity for graft.

c. The main social unit is the family, and as an extension, the hamlet or village, which usually is made up of related families. It is within the walls of the family that education is given, medical care is prescribed, marriages are made, and laws are followed. There is very little contact with surrounding villages and as little as possible with the Government.

d. Before the advent of the French, the Vietnamese had been independent for a thousand years. They were ruled through the Chinese Mandarin system, roughly equivalent to the feudal system. During the French period, the country came under one of the most repressive colonial systems: all power was in the hands of a single Governor General, who often knew and cared little about the people he governed. Since the fall of the French, the Vietnamese have had both civilian and military leadership. Ngo Dinh Diem, a civilian, ruled with an iron hand and probably was the most successful President.

Section II. Political Parties and Interest Groups.

13. Political parties. The history of Vietnam during the preconflict stage constitutes a history of the diverse political parties and interest groups in the country. Political parties existed only as underground nationalist groups during the French colonial period. Interest groups, such as religious sects and ethnic minorities, did exist but possessed no power. These groups did not gain any power until the Japanese served a series of ultimata on the French after the 1940 Nazi invasion and defeat of France.

a. The Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) was the focal point for resistance against Japan and was the base of the nationalist spirit during the early 1940's. The French smashed it after it attempted open revolt in Cochin China in the fall of 1940. The remnants of the Party's Central Committee formed the Vietnamese Independence Party (VIP) in May 1941 and named Ho Chi Minh General Secretary. This was the beginning of what later became the Viet Minh; its leaders were Communists and the organization remained Communist-oriented.

b. The Viet Minh (Vietnamese Independence League) was formed in Luchow, China, in 1941 by Ho Chi Minh. It was made up of several factions but was dominated by the Indochinese Communist Party. It was the only party whose organization extended into the smallest villages. Its membership included nonpartisan individuals and such parties as the Vietnam Socialist Party (VSP) and the Vietnam Democratic Party (VDP), and the political orientation of its members ranged from militant communism to moderate nationalism. National unity was its watchword, and it started new political groups and used force, propaganda, and political maneuvering to achieve its goal. It exercised control over the mass nationalist movement through creation of new organizations aimed at special interests that would appeal to most segments of the populace--women, farmers, young people, soldiers.

c. The Vietnam Nationalist Party (VNP) was one of three main nationalist groups. It had about 5,000 members and was popular with the people as an anti-Communist party. The Chinese furnished it with arms and supplies in an attempt to bring a pro-Chinese party into power.

d. The Vietnam Revolutionary League or Dong Minh Hoi (DMH) was made up of diverse nationalists who were supported by the Chinese and went into exile in China during World War II. The DMH had more difficulty than the VNP in being accepted by the Vietnamese because of its Kuomintang sponsorship. Most of its leaders were killed in a 1930 revolt at Yau Bay, and its political power and influence declined after 1947.

e. The leaders of the Indochinese Communist Party pretended to dissolve the Party after the French attempt to smash it, to allay the fears of the Chinese Nationalists and the Allies. In its place, they formed the Association for the Study of Marxism, which maintained contact with former ICP members, disseminated propaganda, and recruited new members. The Communists, many of whom were influential Government leaders, continued to be the most important political factor within the Vietnamese Nationalist movement. They maintained their leadership in the movement by stressing the need for continuing the struggle for independence.

f. The Vietnam Democratic Party served to unite moderate elements among students, intellectuals, the middle class, and Catholics who were committed to democratic ideals and would not accept Communist ideology. It claimed 100,000 members and played an important part in various Government committees and among military leaders.

g. The Vietnam Socialist Party, organized along the lines of European Socialist parties, was founded in 1946. Its program in Vietnam emphasized cooperation with the Government; cooperation with other parties against foreign aggression; and reliance on parliamentary procedures and propaganda activities.

h. The Independent Party had some members capable of creating their own political organizations and had five cabinet posts in the Government and 90 seats in the Assembly. The fact that it represented many political viewpoints inhibited its total influence.

i. The Trotsky Party was the militant of the militants but never was very strong. It did represent leading elements of a United National Front conglomerate of nationalists parties in the south and continually opposed the efforts of the Viet Minh in Cochin China. It also opposed imperialism, the United States, Japan, and France and supported world revolution.

j. The Vietnam Democratic Socialist Party (VDSP) was a union of a number of political, religious, and labor groups to resist French colonialism. It supported the United National Front and was anti-Communist. Its program called for a continued fight for Vietnamese independence, establishment of a democratic regime, and realization of a socialist society. The VDSP's enthusiastic participation in the United National Front and its opposition to the DRV's Communist leadership led to its conflict with the Viet Minh in the south. The Viet Minh ordered the VDSP dissolved in 1947.

14. Interest groups.

a. The Hoa Hao, a political religious sect based on Buddhist doctrine, was founded in 1939. Its membership, primarily from western

Cochin China, has been estimated at from 200,000 to one million. The Japanese furnished it with arms during World War II to fight against the French. The Hoa Hao half-heartedly collaborated with the Viet Minh, after the Japanese defeat, in establishing the United National Front in an effort to establish some control in Cochin China. The relationship of the two organizations became increasingly strained, and the Viet Minh ordered the Hoa Hao leader executed in June 1947. The lack of unity between the Hoa Hao and other political parties and interest groups in the south was a major factor in the speed and relative ease with which the French regained control.

b. The Cao Dai is a militant political religious sect founded sometime between 1919 and 1926. It attained international attention because of its unusual theological background: a mixture of Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. It had a Roman Catholic hierarchy structure superimposed on an essentially Buddhist ritual. The Cao Dai initially attempted to cooperate with the Viet Minh, but when it became obvious that the Viet Minh was using the sects for its own purposes, the Cao Dai signed a treaty of cooperation with the French. The 12 sects in the Cao Dai, with an estimated membership of one to four million, constituted a strong political factor. Its members were nationalists who supported the struggle for independence, but they were unable to unite sufficiently to achieve their common goal.

15. Political turmoil. Negotiations after the Japanese served their ultimata on the French in 1940 ended in Japan recognizing France's sovereignty in Vietnam and in France retaining local administrative and security functions while granting Japan troop transit rights and control of the military facilities and economic resources of the country. The virtual occupation of Vietnam by the Japanese drove Vietnamese patriots underground. Toward the end of the war, the Japanese suddenly interned nearly all French troops and took over many of the high administrative functions on 9 March 1945 because of their concern about the outcome of the war and the apparent reorientation of French allegiance and control from Vichy to de Gaulle. Two days later, the Japanese appointed Bao Dai as the Emperor of the "independent State" of Vietnam.

a. With the French conveniently out of the way, the Viet Minh began to expand and exert control. The Japanese forces were inadequate to control the countryside, and the Viet Minh was able to establish control in the northern part of Tonkin and prepared to seize Hanoi on Japan's surrender. Two months later, the Viet Minh established the six northern provinces of Tonkin as a liberated zone. When the Japanese capitulated, the Viet Minh sponsored massive demonstrations in Hanoi against colonialism, and its National Liberation Committee established a provisional government with Ho Chi Minh as the President.

b. The US-UK-USSR Potsdam agreement had stipulated that British troops would occupy the southern portion of Vietnam, and Chinese troops would occupy the part north of the 16th parallel when Japan was defeated. Until the Chinese and British troops arrived, Japan was to continue control to keep the peace. The Viet Minh capitalized on this outside power vacuum to build its own strength, using the facade of a government "of the people" dedicated to independence.

c. Vietnam north of the 16th parallel was in a state of internal revolution. Political activity was at a peak, and approximately eight major parties competed for government leadership. Ho Chi Minh's well-organized government, defection of some of Emperor Bao Dai's ministers to Ho, and surrender of others to the revolutionaries caused the Bao Dai government to crumble, and Bao Dai resigned on 25 August. Ho proclaimed Vietnam's independence and establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) on 2 September 1945. His first cabinet contained members of the Communist Viet Minh, Democrat, Catholic, Independent, and other parties. The Viet Minh took immediate steps to reorganize the administrative structure and established so-called Peoples Committees at village, prefecture, city, province, and region levels. Members of the Peoples Committees supposedly were elected by the village inhabitants, but they were controlled by the Viet Minh. The Viet Minh ruthlessly demolished some villages and combined others, to destroy the traditional village structure, emplace Ho's system, and displace or suppress the opposition. Ho's use of force, the natural disasters that occurred during this period, and the ensuing economic problems made it relatively easy for him to maintain control over the populace.

d. Japan's defeat created a political vacuum in Cochin China also, and all the nationalist organizations of the left and right moved to fill it by proclaiming the independence of the country. The major parties in the south at this time were the Cao Dai in Tay Ninh, the Hoa Hao at Can Tho, the Trotskyists in Saigon, and the Viet Minh, who were organizing behind the scenes. The nationalist movement was split several ways. The different groups and sects had obtained arms and were able to enforce concurrence with their programs in their local areas. The Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, and Trotskyites formed a United National Front (UNF) to assume power in Saigon. The Viet Minh then came into the open and appealed to the Front and to the people with propaganda to get them to accept the Viet Minh in Cochin China. The Viet Minh and the UNF met to resolve their differences, and a difficult unity was achieved, but the Trotskyites left the organization and denounced the Viet Minh. Tenuous as this alliance was, it still put the Viet Minh in power. The groups which had formed the UNF were not pleased to see the Communists in power; they knew the Communist Viet Minh was using the nationalist movement to its own ends. Bloody fighting among the more militant political units marred Independence Day (2 September) in the south

and left deep scars on the groups which led to termination of any real unity or a common front organization.

e. British and Indian forces finally arrived in Saigon in mid-September and conducted negotiations with the Committee of the South. The Committee, established to try to create some unity between the Trotskyites and the Viet Minh, regarded itself as the southern representative of the Hanoi Government and was controlled by the ICP. The French with British help and tacit US approval, took over power in Saigon on 23 September in a coup so swift the Viet Minh Government had no time to resist. The southern nationalist movement waged a disunited fight, but the French had regained control south of the 16th parallel, and the political activity shifted to the north where the DRV was succeeding in establishing its hegemony.

f. The rich rice-producing Red River delta of the north had been ravaged by drought and famine in the spring and by floods in August. The countryside was plagued with bandits, Ho's Government had little control at lower levels, and French were confined to the Citadel in Hanoi without arms. The Chinese occupation forces began arriving in mid-September and brought the Dong Minh Hoi and the Vietnamese National Party, which had been in exile in China, with them. These pro-Chinese nationalists launched a campaign of violence against the French and the Viet Minh. Ho tried to heal the differences between his party and the DMH/VNP in an attempt to unite all the factions against the French before the elections he had slated for December.

g. The French started negotiations with the Chinese to try to eliminate the latter from the situation. The French-Chinese agreement of February 1946 called for China to withdraw all its troops by 31 March and for France to give up all extraterritorial rights it had held in China, to relinquish that part of the Haiphong-Yunnan railroad that was in China, and to permit freight to pass duty-free in either direction between China and Vietnam. The French signed an agreement with Ho Chi Minh in March that provided for the French to maintain a limited force in Tonkin and Annam to replace the Chinese and for French recognition of the DRV as a free State which would be part of the Indochinese Federation (not yet in existence) and the French Union. The French did not consider that this agreement meant all of Vietnam; Ho and his adherents thought that it did. The Nationalists absolutely opposed this agreement, as a foot in the door for return to French control, but Ho's limited military resources and the economic chaos caused by flood, famine, and drought forced him to accept it. Ho's acceptance caused the DMH, VNP, and the Trotskyites to withdraw their support of his Government.

Section III. Government Structures.

16. North Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh established a constitutional structure within which he carried out his Communist ideals. Ho promulgated the first Constitution on 9 November 1946. It established the following government structure: a President and Vice President elected from the legislature membership by a two-thirds vote of the members, a Premier chosen by the President with the approval of the legislature, a cabinet of 16 members selected by the Premier, and a unicameral legislature (National Assembly). The Constitution also established a permanent committee in the National Assembly with extensive legislative powers to act when the Assembly was not in session. The Assembly's first meeting was in 1946, its second was in 1953. Power at the national level was held by the Premier and his cabinet and was maintained in the countryside through administrative hierarchies which duplicated the existing French-Vietnamese administration. The network was a clandestine administrative organ of the Viet Minh which, according to its own interests, either annulled or reinforced the French-Vietnamese authority. The parallel organizations were structured along these lines.

Vietnamese	Viet Minh
Village and city	Village
	Intervillage group
Prefecture	District
Province	Province
Region	Zone

The Viet Minh integrated its Peoples Committees into the administrative structure at all levels.

a. Pressure from the DMH, VNP, and the Chinese forced Ho to promise 20 seats in the first National Assembly to the DMH, regardless of the election outcome. After the January 1946 elections, DMH leaders were given several ministerial positions and the Vice Presidency in Ho Chi Minh's Government. Continuing differences between the Viet Minh and the DMH eroded this strength to one cabinet seat by the end of 1946. The Party had little real influence in the Government after the Chinese departed.

b. There was a need for a united front in 1945-46 to overcome the many obstacles for effective control, and Ho Chi Minh used policies of moderation and adjustment. The Viet Minh initially lacked unity and had only a limited political base. Ho diversified his cabinet by bringing in well-known opposition leaders and appointing the still popular Bao Dai as his supreme political adviser. He further dissolved the Communist Party, declared universal suffrage, and convinced the electorate that voting for the Viet Minh in 1946 was voting for independence and democracy instead of communism. His signing of the 6 March agreement in

spite of opposition established the fact that the government the French had to deal with was the Viet Minh and the man was Ho Chi Minh. He convinced his countrymen and the Western world that he was a Nationalist.

17. South Vietnam. There was little united effort to establish a functioning government in Saigon prior to the French coup. Admiral d'Argenlieu, High Commissioner of Indochina, had orders to reestablish French sovereignty after the coup. The French wanted a functional government which would be representative of all the people. The Commissioner established an advisory council of four French and eight Vietnamese to advise and inform him about popular opinion. Seven of the eight Vietnamese were naturalized French citizens, and the majority of the people in the Cochin China area were devoid of any representation or channel of communication. Although political parties and interest groups were in existence, there was no charismatic leader and no strong political organization to capitalize on the frustrations of the people as there was in the north.

a. South Vietnam had two Constitutions between 1945 and 1959. The first, a French document, established a semimonarchy under Bao Dai, provided an executive and a judiciary, and left most of the power in the hands of the French. The second, promulgated by Ngo Dinh Diem, prescribed an elective parliament with legislative powers (the unicameral National Assembly), a judiciary copied from the French, a wholly French institution called the National Economic Council, and a strong executive. The Constitution provided strong guarantees of individual civil liberties, but two articles (44 and 98) gave the President the right to rule by decree until 1961 and to proclaim a state of emergency in one or many areas, providing the legal basis for Diem's dictatorial rule.

b. During the Bao Dai period, Vietnam was divided into four regions and four municipalities. The regions were subdivided into provinces, districts, cantons, villages, and hamlets. The Chief of State appointed a Governor, with French approval, for each region. These Governors had considerable autonomy, because of a tendency to decentralize Government control and administration to the regions, which weakened the authority of the national Government appreciably. The Governors had so much authority that they frequently were in a position to challenge the national Government.

c. The principal duties of the Governors were threefold: to enforce all Government decrees, to raise and appropriate money, and to supervise the officials subordinate to them. Subordinate officials were the province chiefs, who had extensive political, administrative, financial, and military power; district chiefs, who constituted the lowest formal link between the national Government and the rural populace; canton chiefs, who supervised the village police, collection of taxes,

and settlement of differences between villagers or villages; and the village or hamlet councils, which supervised day-to-day village life.

d. Bao Dai was forced to spend most of his time negotiating for increased executive powers and ruled mainly through a series of Prime Ministers, who were in office only at the pleasure of the French. None of them was noted for political acumen. The first, Nguyen Phon Long, was a strong Nationalist who openly advocated Vietnamese alliance with the United States. He was dismissed after 3 months. Tran Von Hun was a rich landowner, a French citizen, and a former Governor of the colony of Cochin China. He was noted for his cooperation with the French and held office until June 1952. Nguyen Van Tow was a former head of the Department of Public Security and also was noted for his loyalty to the French. He resigned in December 1953 after a scandal. Prince Buu Loc was a cousin of Bao Dai and a supporter of French policy.

e. The fifth Prime Minister, Ngo Dinh Diem, was appointed on 7 July 1954 on the eve of the Geneva Accords. Diem quickly began to gather the reins of power. He demanded and received almost dictatorial power from Bao Dai, an action justified in part by the unstable internal situation, fast-rising inflation, and inefficient military and administrative offices. Diem pressed for a referendum to make Vietnam a republic after the Geneva Accords, and became the first President of the newly created Republic of South Vietnam in an election labeled as fradulent by most experts.

f. The President derived his overwhelming power from the new Constitution and consistently expanded it. He had authority to appoint and remove heads of the executive agencies and many other high officials. He was not responsible to the legislature: the President was elected every 5 years by universal suffrage--separately from the constitutionally impotent National Assembly. Diem was assisted only by an inner circle of his closest family and personal advisers, whose influence was strongly apparent both inside and outside the Government. Diem's activities to improve the economy and political stability effectively suspended civil liberties. Purges and illegal arrests were an unpleasant aspect of everyday life. Diem maintained both administrative and operational command and control of the Armed Forces and frequently interfered in the conduct of military operations. His role in Government was highly personalized, and he took an interest in policy at every level.

g. Diem maintained tight control on Government administration through his complete domination of the Executive Office of the President, which was headed by his close friend and personal adviser, Dr. Tran Kim Tuyen. Tran's office controlled agencies concerned directly with political, economic, and military matters, in addition to processing all information going to and from the President. The most important agency under Tran was the Political and Social Research Service--the secret

police. The Service's methods were so brutal and effective that it has been likened to the German Gestapo and Tran to the Soviet Union's Beria.

h. The National Assembly was elected by universal suffrage every 3 years. Both the elections held in March 1956 and in August 1959 were considered fraudulent. A total of 123 constituencies provided a ratio of about one deputy for every 55,000 voters. Deputies usually were from the elite or the middle or upper classes.

(1) The Assembly elected its own officers (a President, two Vice Presidents, a Secretary General, and three Assistant Secretaries General) and standing committees. Its membership was divided into two groups, both of which supported Diem. The majority openly supported him; the minority claimed to be neutral and politically independent, apparently to maintain the guise of a loyal opposition. In reality, no organized legislative opposition to Diem's leadership ever existed.

(2) The passive relationship of the Assembly to the President was prescribed by the Constitution. Even so, the unofficial pressures exerted by the "invisible government" and Diem's restrictions on political activities impeded the effectiveness of the Assembly from the start. The authority granted the President to rule by decree further curtailed the power of the Assembly. It seldom challenged the executive authority of the President and primarily constituted a forum where Government affairs could be debated and national policies criticized, to impress outsiders with the democratic nature of Diem's regime. At best, the National Assembly was a sounding board for Diem and never exercised any true legislative authority.

i. The Vietnamese judiciary was staffed by the French and used French laws during the first part of the preconflict period. The system was entirely out of harmony with Vietnamese life and culture, and the judges committed many errors in justice because of their lack of knowledge of the culture. One of the main problems was the inability of most of the judges to speak native languages and their consequent need to rely on interpreters who were corruptible and often would distort the facts.

(1) Diem made changes to make the system more equitable but retained the basic French structure. The new system contained both regular and special courts to handle penal, civil, and commercial cases; special civilian tribunals to handle juvenile, labor, and land matters; and military tribunals to handle political offenders. The Constitution also provided for a High Council of the Judiciary, a Constitutional Court, and a Special Court of justice to adjudicate cases of impeachment of high Government officials, but they were not organized during 1955-59.

(2) The court system was administered by the Justice Department; but the courts were dominated by Diem, because the judges were appointed by the President without any requirement for Assembly approval. The judges were subject to unofficial pressure from the President's supporters in political cases, and the courts frequently were bypassed through administrative decisions at all levels. Suspected anti-Diem political offenders often were apprehended without legal warrant and imprisoned without legal trial. A Government ordinance of 11 January 1956 authorized the arrest, imprisonment, and assignment of residence of any person considered to be dangerous to the State. There is strong evidence that the total erosion of the judiciary and its complete domination by the Government and the President may have been an important factor in Diem's gaining and maintaining full dictatorial power.

(3) The codes of jurisprudence used by the courts during Diem's regime were about the same as those used prior to World War II. Criminal cases were handled under the French Penal Code; civil and commercial litigation was resolved under a mixture of ancient Annamese codes and French laws; civil cases were settled according to traditional Vietnamese laws and customs based on Confucian-Buddhist traditions. Under these traditions, the individual was expected to conform to standards set for and to maintain social harmony in keeping with the welfare of the family, the village commune, and the State.

18. Political culture. Vietnam is divided in many ways; some of the division are deep and irreparable. Divisions exist regionally among the people of north, central, and south Vietnam; divisions exist socially among the very small elite, the slightly larger upper class, the growing middle class, and the mass of peasants (85 percent); divisions exist ethnically between the native Vietnamese and the minorities--the Chams, the Khmers, the Chinese, and the Montagnards; divisions exist philosophically among the Buddhists, the Roman Catholics, and the two politico-religious sects, the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao; and divisions exist ideologically among the democrats, the monarchists, and the Communists.

a. Vietnam has no history of freedom in the Western sense. It always has been led by strong autocratic rulers; any leader who was less than harsh would have put his heavenly mandate in doubt. The peasants' lives are dominated by the fatalism of Confucian teachings and are dedicated to the peace and harmony afforded by a quiet agricultural existence. Years of war have tempered their Confucianism with a strong pragmatism; they now support the nearest force, shunning all ideologies. Unlike other developing countries, Vietnam has had no massive infusion of new ideas and techniques through universal education. Its people are incapable of understanding the war that rages around them or the vital issues behind it. Whoever can offer them a safe return to the tranquil life of the farm is good; whoever disturbs that life is bad.

b. Other Confucian ideologies are important to Vietnamese political culture. One aspect is the seeming incompatibility of "face" and the democratic process; democracy's all or nothing nature allows little compromise or saving face. Another aspect is the Vietnamese respect for the family, especially in the lives of low paid civil servants. If such a man were not to ask for and accept graft to better his family whenever he could, he would be less than a fool in the eyes of his neighbors An offshoot of the idea of respect for and reliance on the family is displayed in the unwillingness of any Vietnamese farmer to deal with or depend on the national Government. Settlement of disputes, medical or technical advice, counseling and guidance--all are obtained within the family or the village, which usually consists of related families. This "bamboo hedge" restricts the peasant's interest to his own immediate surroundings and makes him apathetic, at best, to events outside them. The other three classes do display increasing awareness of both nationalism and civic responsibility at each step up the social ladder. The middle class, although still under the influence of the xenophobia that plagues the farmers, is able to adjust to advancements in Vietnamese life in recent years and supports change. The upper class and the elite often have Western educations and are least semi-Western in outlook. They are able to take a larger view of Vietnamese history and usually are in favor of Western innovations.

19. Elements of political power and influence. The basic power structure in Vietnam underwent little change during 1945-59. To the peasants, the names of the people were different but the Government was just as oppressive and authoritarian in 1959 under Diem as it had been in 1945 under the French. To have political power of any sort in 1945 a man had to be a native or naturalized Frenchman and to be a member of the elite or upper class; in 1959, he had to be an admirer and supporter of Diem, highly born, and probably Catholic.

a. There was little organized resistance either to the French or to Diem other than by the Communists. The religious sects, the Hoa Hao and the Cao Dai, were manipulated and used by Diem until they grew restless, at which point he suppressed them. The underground political groups were disunited, disorganized, and ineffective. The middle class, which has been a catalyst to change in so many countries, was politically emasculated in Vietnam by its small size and apolitical nature. The Binh Xuyen, which had controlled both the police and vice in the Saigon area under Bao Dai, was destroyed out of hand by Diem soon after he assumed power. The minority ethnic groups, such as the Chinese and the Montagnards, lived among a hostile peasantry and, hence, never were in a position to have any political influence.

b. Diem never achieved the influence he desired, even though there was no strong challenge to his national power. The old Vietnamese saying, "The Emperor's laws stop at the village gates," remained true

under Diem. His efforts to counter the intransigency of the peasants were largely unsuccessful. He replaced the councils of elders that traditionally had governed the villages with strangers appointed by the Government. He moved thousands of peasants from their ancestral homes to new sites in his effort to open new land or redevelop old lands deserted by peasants fleeing the war zones. He appointed Army officers as province and district chiefs. All these steps were taken to achieve a greater degree of Government control over the country and, in almost all cases, ended by alienating the people.

20. Political leadership. There were no native Vietnamese political leaders capable of wholly filling the needs of the people during the preconflict period. The French leaders generally were good, but they had difficulty understanding the natives and their problems. Their theory and plan to assuage nascent Vietnamese nationalism were workable, but the leader they placed in office, Bao Dai, was incapable of rallying popular support. Diem thought he could rally popular support by controlling the economy and pacifying the people. His attempts often were clumsy, harsh, and repressive.

a. Political institutions in the north during the preconflict period can be categorized as autocratic. The actions and methods used by the leaders have affected all aspects of life and political activity, including the rise and decline of their own institutions. The one exception was the ruler of the DRV, Ho Chi Minh; his established Communist political institution never declined in power. Ho also was the leader of the Nationalists in Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin China between 1945 and 1949. His political power grew and he became a national hero between 1949 and 1954, in spite of his open alliance with the Communists, because of his leadership against the French. Government leaders and the members of the National Assembly were anti-French Nationalists, many of whom had been in French jails and in exile with their political parties. The real political leadership came from the Political Bureau and the Central Executive Committee of the Dang Lao Dong or Communist Party. Imposition of administrative committees at each layer of government down to village level negated innovative leadership and the rise of leaders from among the farmers. The chain of command in these committees operated much like the military chain of command.

b. France's reestablishment of its old colonial empire in the south stunted political growth and development of the Vietnamese there. The French did provide favorable conditions in 1945-46, the years of Vietnamese independence, for growth of the politicoreligious sects and the Binh Xuyen, a robber horde, by their efforts to eliminate the Viet Minh organization from the south. The French attempt to rally support of Nationalist leaders by placing Bao Dai in power was tragic. The elite and well educated would not participate in his governments; they remained on the sidelines to observe.

c. Ngo Dinh Diem tried to establish a strong State when he became Prime Minister on the eve of independence in 1954. However, he had been out of the country nearly 4 years and out of the mainstream of Vietnamese political life for 20; he had no real political base in a party. Not everyone in Vietnam regarded Diem as supremely qualified to head the Government. His last Government position had been in 1932, Bao Dai distrusted him, and the Viet Minh pictured him as the tool of US interventionists. Diem's administration lacked organizational skill at the top and administrative skill at lower levels. The initial administration he led consisted of political appointees of the old corrupt Saigon administration; they were in many cases pro-French and pro-Bao Dai, and Diem realized that this situation must be changed. He had no means available, however, for replacing the corrupt system immediately.

d. Diem's political supporters thought that his strong personality would stimulate political growth, and that he would preside over the political and social transformation of the country. The existing political parties would not compromise, however, and fought each other; their leaders were jealous and refused to support Diem. The old collaborators inside and outside the Government and, now more than ever, the intellectuals refused to support Diem. Lacking the support of the people of the south, Diem appointed many northern Catholic refugees to governmental posts.

e. Among the problems facing Diem's administration in 1954 was the apathy toward the elections, specified by the Geneva Accords, and the general feeling that the Viet Minh would return to control after the election. The leadership vacuum, the repression of Government opposition, and the disfunctioning of Government channels for articulation to and from the masses had left the people with no one to speak for them except the Viet Minh. Diem's Government did attain a certain degree of stable control over parts of the country, but it did not foster evolution into a free society; absence of political freedom was an essential condition to the relative stability Diem had attained.

21. Quality of Government administration. The quality of the administrative arm of the Government was not high at any time during the preconflict stage.

a. Prior to 1950, the various French colonial and local government offices were staffed by members of the French Colonial Civil Service System and were divided into three distinct levels. The "French administration" directed policy and execution down to the district level (parallel native administrations in Annam and Tonkin were roundly ignored by the French), a "native administration" existed at the lower middle level of Government, and a "local administration" was responsible for government at the local level--only the last managing to maintain a degree of autonomy. Deficiencies in this system were manifest: lack of native experience in Government operations; decentralization of administration

to the regions, which perpetuated the ancient divisions of the country; use of French, a language few Vietnamese knew, as the official Government language; lack of formal education (only 2 percent of the Vietnamese had college educations; only 4 percent had completed high school); suppression of initiative by imposing restrictive legalistic forms and procedures; and mistrust among the general populace of Vietnamese who cooperated with the French.

b. The situation was further complicated in 1950, when Bao Dai established a Vietnamese Civil Service System along much the same lines as the French System. Under the Vietnamese System, employees were divided into cadres by occupation group. Prospective employees who did not meet special educational or experience standards were required to take entrance examinations, and starting wages were based on education and experience. All employees had to serve a probationary period and could be required to pass another examination before being accorded permanent career status. Promotion was based on service and merit. Temporary employees often were hired to satisfy the need for large numbers of civil servants.

c. Little information is available about the Vietnamese Civil Service in 1950-55, but it gradually increased in size as the French withdrew. Despite the French withdrawal, the language of Government remained French, appointments to responsible positions still were controlled by the French, and administration continued on a regional basis with much the same results as under the French administration. One significant step to improve the system was establishment of a National Institute of Administration in Dalat in 1953 to provide 50 trained candidates a year.

d. Diem retained the system established under Bao Dai and took measures to strengthen it. However, he gave credence to two fallacies: that anyone who had worked for the French was a collaborator and should not be permitted in the Vietnamese Government service and that the Cochin Chinese, who made up the bulk of the populace of South Vietnam, lacked the sophistication necessary for Government service and would have to be educated by Vietnamese from the north. Guided by these basic beliefs and under pressure to establish an efficient administration before the French departed, Diem instituted many measures to improve the Civil Service System, using his constitutional authority. One early action was to move the National Institute of Administration to Saigon; another was to place control of the entire System in his office. Other measures and their impacts on the situation are described below.

(1) Army officers were appointed as province and district chiefs. This action further curtailed the power of the Civil Service, which had been lessened when Diem reduced the administrative authority of regional governors in 1956.

(2) Diem recruited individuals he considered personally loyal to him from central and northern Vietnam and used them in the national administration and in the old Cochin China area. The proportion of these employees in the Civil Service became much greater than their representation in the populace, as the Service increased from 43,000 in 1956 to 124,000 in 1960. The problem was aggravated by the use of many of the "outlanders" to spearhead the Government pacification programs in the south. Diem's regime soon became known as a Government of the south by northerners.

(3) Political loyalty to the President became a prerequisite to appointment. Politically unreliable employees often were transferred to remote and dangerous areas. Civil servants were required to attend weekly political indoctrination sessions to acquaint them with the philosophy of the administration, current policy, and anti-Communist strategy and tactics; and nearly all were required to join the National Revolutionary Civil Servant's League, which was created in 1955 under presidential auspices. Thus, civil servants were oriented on the President and frequently disregarded the needs and desires of the people.

(4) The National Institute of Administration was handicapped by weak leadership and an inefficient staff and soon became the dumping ground for civil servants not wanted elsewhere. This situation produced poorly qualified graduates and further lowered the quality of civil administration. The President also allowed older employees to stay in their jobs despite frequent inefficiency. Thus, when well-trained civil servants were hired, they could not be promoted to middle or high level management because the presence of the older employees created an impasse.

22. Effects of political actions. South Vietnam was born into a world of conflict and has not yet emerged from it. The Government, despite its lack of unity and leadership, did accomplish some positive goals: it held universal suffrage elections, dethroning Bao Dai and establishing a republic; negotiated the withdrawal of French troops; established a constituent assembly; overcame organized military opposition and built an Army; resettled approximately 900,000 refugees; promulgated a Constitution; and instituted land reform, reconstruction, education, and some economic planning. The National Assembly and the political system established by the Constitution were used infrequently by Ngo Dinh Diem. He made policy with the assistance of close personal advisers. The Constitution provided a basic system for establishment of a viable Government; however, the oligarchy negated the effectiveness of the tools and the political system failed. Some of the counterproductive actions of the Government during 1954-59 were termination of the special status given the Montagnards by the French; infusion of northern Catholics into Government positions in the south, which was only 10 percent Catholic; suppression of the Chinese community's support by advocating citizenship changes; destruction of the traditional village councils; and mismanagement of land development.

23. Foreign influence. The three most important foreign influences on Vietnam have been Chinese, French, and American.

a. The Chinese ruled the Vietnamese for a thousand years. From them the Vietnamese drew such diverse elements as their alphabet, their political system, their concept of medicine, and their personal philosophy. The Vietnamese dislike the Chinese as a people, although they fear and deeply respect the Chinese heritage and culture.

b. The French had control of Vietnam effectively from the 1880's until 1954 and the Geneva Accords. During this 70 years, they had only a minimal influence on the Vietnamese people. As a colonial power, France ruled Vietnam for the benefit of metropolitan France and made little effort to educate the Vietnamese in the French way of life or in modern technological advances. Most of the elite, and those of the upper class who could afford to, sent their children to France to be educated, which did temper slightly the anti-French and anti-Western bias of the general populace.

c. The country with the most important influence during the pre-conflict period has been the United States. It supported the French in their efforts to retake Indochina after World War II. When the Communists defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu, the US Government decided that containment of communism and support of the vaguely democratic Government of South Vietnam had become American tasks. Consequently, it began direct aid to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam even before the final departure of the French.

(1) The United States sent a substantial Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) to assure proper disbursement of the incoming armaments and to suggest ways of making the Vietnamese Army (ARVN) more effective. The MAAG, in effect, began to run the ARVN, and the steady rise of the influence of the US military advisers was not always propitious. They tried to reorganize the ARVN on the basis of their experience in the Korean conflict without regard to the difference in the enemy's style of warfare. The United States also had a strong contingent of economic advisers and technicians in Vietnam, whose main task was to shore up the economy and rally the people behind Diem. Massive US aid created a false prosperity in South Vietnam that would topple at the first sign of economic difficulties. In addition, these economic advisers made many proposals, to rally and unify the countryside, which failed to give adequate consideration to the Vietnamese cultural heritage and traditions, and their implementation succeeded only in alienating the people.

(2) US influence was by no means all negative. It was responsible for the Government's making great strides in the fields of public health and technological renewal and development. The MAAG was able to instill a degree of pride and camaraderie in the ARVN that had been lacking to supply the ARVN with modern weapons, and to train it in their use.

CHAPTER 3

ECONOMIC FACTORS

Section I. Introduction.

24. Background and demography. This chapter contains an analysis of the Vietnamese economy in general and of those elements which may have contributed to unrest and instability in the preconflict stage in particular. Broad economic policies promulgated by both the French Colonial Government and the native regime which assumed power in 1954 are examined, and their interrelationship with political, sociological, and military programs is shown.

a. Vietnam was predominantly agricultural for almost 2,000 years. It had had only such handicraft industries as brasswork and enamelware before the French conquest (1858-83). Tonkin, the most northern part, included the Red River Delta and the mountains around it. The delta is a densely populated rice-growing and industrial area and has coal and mineral deposits. Annam, the narrow coastal plains and central highlands east of the Chaine Annamatique, contains a number of small deltas. The coastal area produces rice and miscellaneous crops, and the mountains are sparsely populated and mostly forest. Cochin China consists of the Mekong River Delta and a small part of the hills northeast of the delta. The delta is the rice bowl of Indochina, although Cochin China is not as densely populated as the Red River Delta or even some of the smaller deltas along the central coast.

b. As a French colony, Indochina's economy was developed to benefit metropolitan France. Prior to World War II, the two major principles guiding French policy in Vietnam were exploitation of Vietnam's natural resources, which provided raw materials for France; and reservation of the Vietnamese domestic market for French manufacturers. The major resource of what is now South Vietnam was uncultivated and underdeveloped land. Frenchmen, Chinese, and favored Vietnamese were given large land grants for the cultivation of rice, rubber, tea, and coffee. As a result, the south became the primary area for agricultural production. The French permitted some light industries such as rice mills, rice alcohol distilleries, sugar refineries, and rubber-processing factories to develop in the Saigon-Cho Lon area. Most of the limited industrial development permitted by the French was concentrated in Tonkin, and most of the coal and valuable mineral deposits were in the north. The coal mines in Tonkin enabled the French to become the leading coal exporter of southeast Asia. Although the Tonkin Delta did produce rice, it never produced enough to supply its own needs. The French instituted trade among the separate states of Vietnam, and this resulted in the south providing rice to the north in exchange for coal, paper, cement, textiles, and glass.

c. The French improved the sanitation of the cities and initiated programs to eliminate tropical diseases. They built modern roads and constructed the Trans-Indochinese Railroad which ran from Saigon to the Chinese border in the north. The French improved old ports, constructed new ones, and instituted river controls with dikes and irrigation projects. Under French rule, Indochina became a rice exporter and rose to rank third in the world. Tea production was increased, and rubber and coffee growing were introduced.

d. Indochina's limited foreign trade was run by the Chinese when the French gained control. The number of Chinese merchants increased greatly when the French inaugurated rice exports. Additional Chinese labor was imported by the French to help build new railroads and highways and to work on the rubber plantations. The Chinses also were engaged in trade, light industry, banking, crafts, and rice mills, and they became an important part of the economy of Indochina.

e. A new class of Vietnamese evolved out of French land reclamation and grants of large holdings to Frenchmen, Chinese, and favored Vietnamese. Many of these landowners moved to the cities and returned only to collect rents and interest from loans made to tenant farmers to buy seed and equipment. Speculators also bought land and rented or leased it to farmers. Over a period of time, the greed and high interest rates of the landowners plus the taxes the French had levied or raised reduced the life of the peasant farmer to one of backbreaking toil and debt. As their landholdings decreased below the subsistence level, industries and mining increased in the north, and large plantations developed in the south. A new working class came into being at approximately the same time as a small middle class and a white-collar group. The French maintained control of industry, big business, and banking, however, and the few rich Vietnamese had little economic or political power.

Section II. Preconflict Economy, 1945-54.

25. Agriculture. The Vietnamese had engaged in wet rice farming for centuries on the alluvial deltas along the coast. The ricefields had been communally held and allocated, by the village elders, to families to work, in accordance with ancient practice which also required periodic reallocation of the lands. As the people migrated southward, village councils lured settlers farther south by giving individual families permanent usufruct in specific fields until the family line died out. The French made large land grants (called concessions) to Frenchmen, Chinese, and favored Vietnamese for cultivation of rice, rubber, tea, and coffee. In spite of new land tenure concepts introduced by the French, the Vietnamese peasant still believes every family has a right to its own land, and the poor landless people should be able to use communal lands to grow food for themselves.

a. The traditions of the Vietnamese Empire still existed in certain sectors. Communal or public lands comprised all arable land in the north and north-central sections that were not privately-owned subsistence paddies, and 75-85 percent of the land was worked by the private or communal owner.

b. The situation in the south presented a marked contrast. Only about 3 percent of the land was communally owned. Most of the rest was in large plantations owned by French companies, Chinese, or Vietnamese, and tenant farming predominated. The terms of most rental contracts obliged the farmers to pay the rent in advance in cash, and they often had to borrow from the landlord to pay the rent or to purchase seed, implements, or fertilizer. The farmer also had to pay the landlord a fixed portion of his crops. The landlord could terminate the lease without cause, and not even the Land Reform of 1953 relieved this unjust situation. Tenants could not deal directly with the landowner but had to bargain through an estate manager or prime tenant.

c. Sharecropping dominated the land tenure pattern in central Vietnam. Under this system, the landlord did not receive a cash payment but claimed 50 percent of the crop. A manager or prime tenant also could obtain a franchise or lease on an estate from an absentee owner for a fixed fee in central Vietnam and, in some cases, in the north.

d. Traditional crops in Vietnam are rice, potatoes, corn, and other vegetables for personal consumption and vegetables, coffee, copra, fruits, rubber, sugar, tea, cotton, and tobacco for export. Forest products include bamboo, cinnaman, and quinine. The chief crop, and the one upon which the entire nation literally depends for survival, is rice. For the most part, the rice is grown on small paddies in the irrigated river lowlands of the Mekong Delta in the south and the Red River Delta in the north. Some rice is cultivated in the north and central highlands, but only in meager quantities for subsistence purposes. The French introduced the rubber tree into Indochina early in their colonization, and the Vietnamese people suffered impressed labor, sickness, and degradation in establishing the original plantations.

e. Along the Red River, the traditionalist section of Vietnam, small landholdings, centuries-old methods, and the growing pressure of population on limited arable land resources dictate a low per capita yield. There the peasants experience food deficits and a generally low standard of living. Because of a lack of sophisticated irrigation systems and water control, floods and droughts could and often did cause actual starvation, as happened in 1945-46. Rice farmers in the south are much more influenced by French methods, and the economy bears many hallmarks of Western economic practices, including extensive, relatively sophisticated irrigation systems and water control. These paddy farmers still prefer the time-tested methods and equipment of their ancestors to the more modern techniques that are available to them.

Their advantage over the north is predominantly in irrigation, flood control, and crop diversification. They were reluctant to experiment with new techniques, unless success was assured, because of the small margin between privation and living in relative comfort.

f. The northern peasant who owned his own small parcel of land, from which he drew a meager subsistence, cultivated his land carefully and thoroughly. Most of the farms, however, were controlled by the moneylenders. The Colonial Government had encouraged ricegrowing in the past by lending money to the holders of large estates who, in turn, lent it to their farmers--but at usurious interest rates. A couple of bad harvests literally turned the nominal owners of small farms into slaves of the lenders. Although the peasant generally was tied to the soil of his ancestors by cultural traditions, there were wage laborers in the south who worked on the large plantations. They were recruited by labor contractors or landowners and generally signed 3-year contracts. They often were badly exploited, and a peasant fortunate enough to survive the sickness, deprivation, and miserable working conditions for a full 3 years frequently had not collected enough money to return to his home. The majority of the landless peasants became itinerant workers who swarmed over the countryside during the harvest seasons. Nevertheless, the average peasant in the south enjoyed greater prosperity and had more leisure than his counterparts in Annam and Tonkin.

g. The great mass of those who till the soil have benefitted little, if at all, from the Westernization of their economy. Their share of the country's total income was no greater by 1954 than it had been when economic life centered almost entirely on the closed, self-sufficient societies of the villages. Little of the misery and poverty the peasant had suffered had been alleviated. The severe dislocations caused by the Japanese occupation and ensuing hostilities made his lot even worse. Talk of land reform and propaganda that gave careful attention to the material needs of the peasant made him aware of his suffering and more ready to follow dynamic leaders.

h. Most peasants had lived with their indebtedness all their lives, many having inherited it from their ancestors. When the French tried to alleviate the peasants' dependence on the usurer, much of the credit they made available went directly to the large landholders, since they were the only ones who had the collateral to make the loan; and the peasant still had to pay exorbitant interest. The practice of usury was not restricted to French landholders; wealthy Chinese and Indian merchants also engaged in it. They were able to acquire landholdings and commercial interests in the rubber and copra trade in the very manner that France's repressive practices and edicts had been designed to preclude. It was not uncommon for the landlord of the south to collect more in interest than in rent. The sharecropper worked 60-80 percent of Cochin China's farmland and generally had to surrender well over half his harvest to his landlord to cover indebtedness incurred as rent or usurious loans.

26. Industry. Fully 90 percent of the people derived their livelihood from farming or from distributing or processing farm crops. Approximately 20 million of the 26 million people labored in the rice paddies. A half million were artisans who relied on farming for their basic incomes. Only about 400,000 artisans derived their incomes entirely from their crafts. An additional 150,000 were employed in industry and mining, but they were a very fluid labor force. Because so many of Vietnam's craftsmen, miners, and factory workers were farmers "on leave" from their rural villages, it is difficult to make a clear-cut distinction between the agricultural and industrial labor forces. The remainder of the populace was engaged in services which related directly to commerce and transportation. The majority of those involved in commerce were Chinese and Indian; the remainder, for the most part, were Pakistani. These three ethnic groups also made up the majority of the moneylenders.

a. Vietnamese practicing professions were a small elite and highly influential group, most of whom were civil servants. The Confucian system established the occupational hierarchy in Vietnam. Under this system the scholar takes precedence, followed by the peasant, then craftsmen, then merchants occupying the lowest rung on the occupational ladder. In recent years it has undergone some revision, but still is valid in Vietnam.

b. Handicrafts, carried on by local artisans in "cottage industry," constituted the local industry in all sectors. Local crafts have become less important since the French introduced machinemade goods. They still are an important source of income for many agricultural workers, however, and provide rural people with essential consumer goods and farm implements. Each section specialized in different crafts: the north specialized in textiles and basket weaving; the central section in pottery, woodworking, and silk weaving; and the south in pottery and wood and metal work.

c. The people of the Red River Delta depend on local crafts both for their own supplies and as an income supplement. Their methods and tools are extremely rudimentary and require an extraordinary expenditure of time and labor. A severe limitation exists in industry and mining. The French did not begin serious training of the labor force until they were fighting for their Colonial "life." The Vietnamese also share the responsibility, for their culture and traditions do not lend themselves to the formation of an industrially advanced nation. Most of the farmers "on leave" from their paddies would desert the industrial labor force and return to their villages whenever the mood struck them. Many Vietnamese attitudes and habits, such as periods of intensive effort followed by long periods of idleness, were carried over into industry from the peasants' agrarian background.

d. The introduction of the machine caused very little, if any, specialization of labor, because the French held the positions which required technical training or specialization. Vietnamese coolies provided the labor force of coal mines. They did the digging and hauling, and needed no more special skills than the peasants who were impressed to work on such public works programs as dams and roads. On the other hand, some skills have been developed in smaller industries, impressed to work such public works programs as dams and roads. On the other hand, some skills have been developed in smaller industries such as cement, electric power, chemicals, and machine shops. A relatively large number of mechanics and semiskilled workers emerged as a byproduct of Vietnamese hostilities. The Vietnamese received intensive on-the-spot instruction from the French and were most important in the servicing of French equipment. The result of this instruction is visible throughout Vietnam today in the abundance of small automobile, equipment, and bicycle repair shops.

e. Industrial wages were very low in comparison to those for other unskilled nonagricultural employment. A minimum wage of VN$17.5 a day was established for unskilled industrial workers by the Saigon Government in 1951. It was estimated that more than VN$13 a day was required to provide the minimum food for the worker. This left only VN$4 a day for clothing, lodging, taxes, and upkeep of his family. The wages paid women and children were not sufficient to cover even their minimum food requirements. There was a large disparity in wages between those paid Vietnamese and French for the same type of labor--the wages of the French being much higher. Wages paid civil servants and white collar workers also were disproportionately higher than those paid industrial workers. Wages-in-kind, including such benefits as medical assistance, food and lodging, and family allowances are traditional and have constituted a considerable portion of the wages expected. These benefits have been given greater importance in recent times by inflation and food shortages.

Section III. Preconflict Economy, 1954-59.

27. Initial situation. With the signing of the Geneva Accords, after the fall of the French at Dien Bien Phu and the rise to power of Ngo Dinh Diem, South Vietnam faced a new era; but it was not to be a simple transition. The following factors combined to cause general economic chaos in South Vietnam in 1954: previous lack of development; 12 years of war and internal strife; partition from the industrialized north; a massive influx of refugees from the north; rising inflation that threatened to run wild; and isolation of the Government from the countryside. During the French Colonial period, Vietnam had been exploited by French business interests. War had caused much loss of life and skilled labor, ruined the communication systems, and severely deteriorated much of the land. When partition occurred, the north was cut off from the

agriculture of the south, and the south from the industry of the north. Before WW II, South Vietnam had an efficient highway system some 12,000 km long. By 1954, the paved roads were useless due to interdiction tactics, weathering, and lack of maintenance. The rest could only be used during the dry season. A large majority of the bridges had been destroyed: 240 in one critical 650-km stretch of Highway One, the most important national artery. The railway system had suffered the same kind of destruction. The rolling stock and the roadbeds were ruined by lack of maintenance and deliberate destruction, and the system was totally inoperable because of bridge destruction. Natural waterways and 2,000 km of canals were another important means of transportation. Much of this system was unusable because of widespread destruction and deterioration of the cargo fleet and because of lack of canal dredging. Adequate commercial power was available from coal, oil, charcoal, and electricity.

28. Long-range economic planning and decisions. In 1954, the Government set itself the goal of building an independent economy which ultimately would not require outside assistance. In the interim, it needed outside assistance to establish an adequate standard of living, until it could build its production enough for its exports to create a balance of payments that would permit necessary imports.

a. The purpose of 1954-58 US aid to Vietnam was to assist in developing a politically and economically viable nation. Vietnam's most demanding problem, after security, was its economy; especially since accelerated economic growth could be the deciding factor in solving its security problems--by ameliorating the existing problems of an exploding population growth and unsatisfactory living standards and by obviating development of a revolution of expectations among the people.

b. In the long-range economic development of South Vietnam, President Diem faced two fundamental decisions. The first was whether the limited investment resources should be concentrated on industrial or agricultural development, and the second, whether the Government should plan and implement, or provide, a climate for private industrial development. Agriculture had the greatest potential for development. With the bulk of the population engaged in agricultural pursuits, the possibilities of expanding the areas of cultivation, bringing idle lands back into use, increasing yields, and diversifying production held the greatest potential for increasing exports. Agrarian reform and a higher standard of living for the farmers, if achieved rapidly, would enable Diem to win their support. Both the French and Americans agreed in 1954 that agrarian reform was a must, and President Diem initiated formulation of an agrarian reform program.

c. When Vietnam was divided and the interrelationship of trade between the industrial north and agricultural south was disrupted, it was obvious that South Vietnam could not attain anything approaching economic independence without at least limited industrial development.

Without industrial development, South Vietnam's one-crop, or only slightly diversified, agricultural economy would be subject to the fluctuations of world prices and demands. During the Colonial period, when agricultural production was at an alltime high, the Vietnamese had had a low standard of living and underemployment had been frequent. Farmers usually worked for only part of the year and many moved to urban areas. Among the urban population, many were either unemployed or underemployed. Agriculture offers limited employment opportunities, land reclamation doesn't necessarily absorb more labor, and more efficient farming reduces employment opportunities. Thus, the Vietnamese economy could and should develop a substantial industrial sector to provide its own consumer goods and to create productive employment for a growing labor force.

d. The 1956 UN Economic Survey Mission to the Republic of Vietnam recognized the lack of potential for heavy industry in South Vietnam, but it made a very strong case for far greater expansion of the limited industry. This Mission pointed out that South Vietnam had far less industry than normal for a primarily agricultural country, and that additional industrial development was essential if the economy were to make substantial economic gains.

e. The US Operations Mission to Vietnam (USOM) believed that exclusive concentration on agricultural exports to permit importing a better standard of living would be less useful economically than developing a greater industrial capability at the expense of some agricultural development. South Vietnam could not obtain enough foreign exchange through agricultural exports even to maintain the standard of living for its increasing population, much less to improve it. At least, limited industrial capacity was needed to meet some of the demands for consumer goods and to offset some foreign aid.

f. Substantial industrial development was required if South Vietnam were to approach anything like economic independence. One of the strong arguments for industrial development was to alleviate underemployment and unemployment, which were extensive and serious by 1957. One-quarter of the working class in Saigon was unemployed, creating a large pool of idle labor and a potential source of unrest and dissatisfaction; and the farmers in the Mekong Delta worked only part of the year, and many of them were idle.

g. President Diem's Vietnamese advisers believed that the priority problems of security, inflation, restoring agricultural production, rebuilding communication networks, and raising living standards of rural people precluded more rapid industrial development. Diem's advisers defended their position on the basis that the immediate problem was to maintain the standard of living and that the other aspects of economic development could come in time, but the existing situation required that their most important resource, the human resource, be maintained.

29. Land development and resettlement. Land development is a natural complement to agrarian reform, in that it provides instant proprietorship for landless farmers while easing the overpopulation of the land already in use. South Vietnam's land development program was a joint undertaking of the Government and the USOM, with the United States furnishing the funds and technical assistance. The areas selected for development and resettlement were the central highlands, the central and southern wooded regions, and the marshy plains of the delta. The Government selected the central highlands to improve security and suppress the Communist bands organizing in those remote areas; the principal infiltration route of the Communist cadre from North Vietnam was in the highlands, especially around Pleiku. Land development in the central highlands and northern region also would assist in integrating the Montagnards into the society.

a. USOM officials objected strenuously to emphasizing development of the central highlands so early in the program on the basis that the people already were in the delta; roads, cities, and markets were available there; and the cost of clearing and reclaiming land would be less, and that relocating people to the "forbidden" hinterlands of the highlands would take careful preparation and much time. Diem's primary considerations were the long-run productivity of heretofore unused land and the possibility that assimilating the Montagnards into the society would gain their loyalty and strengthen the social and political foundations of the country; he was not expecting either action to cause an overwhelming immediate economic improvement. US advice was ignored, USOM disagreed with the Vietnamese management and use of US equipment and funds, Vietnamese administrative deficiencies further strained relations, and USOM withdrew monetary support late in 1957 and provided only technical advice.

b. Despite USOM's substantial withdrawal, the programs started in the central highlands and later extended to the other areas were impressively successful. The Government succeeded in persuading people to move to the central highlands, overcame the basic problems of integrating the Montagnards into the society, and assured a fair geographic balance of the populace. In 2 years (by mid 1959), 125,082 people had been resettled, 21,876 houses had been constructed, and 48,336 hectares of previously unused land had been cleared. Resettlement areas had better sanitation and health facilities, more and better schools, and better public administration than rural areas traditionally had had. Each family had its own plot of land, tenure was assured, and overcrowding in the old farming sectors had been reduced noticeably.

c. Resettlement of refugees was undertaken by the Government's refugee commission. Several countries supported the resettlement effort, but the United States provided 97 percent of the needed aid funds through USOM. The commission planned first to provide food and other essential provisions and then to plan housing according to the vocations of the refugees and their expected assimilation into the society. It created 314 resettlement villages: 283 for farmers, 26 for fisherman, and five

for artisans. They were located throughout the country according to the advantages of the local situations: 207 in the south, 50 in the central coastal plains, and 26 in the central highlands. The commission was dissolved in 1957 on completion of a remarkable task. It had cleared land; dug wells; provided medical facilities and work animals, livestock, and feeding gear; built schools; and planned and supplied all immediate and future needs of the villages.

30. Agrarian reforms. Relegation of the tenant farmer to a peasant's role in society has been a problem worldwide. When the Vietnamese Communist spoke of the "People's War of Liberation," they referred to "liberating" the farmers who owned virtually no land but cultivated 80 percent of the land as tenant farmers. Diem knew that successful reform was as much a key to stability and economic growth in the agricultural sector as it was to his own survival and was quick to act to improve the tenant farmers' position. The Government enacted two ordinances early in 1955 that cut rental from 50 percent of the principal crop to 12-25 percent, limited interest on production loans to 12 percent a year, and provided penalties for overcharging: established local committees to arbitrate landlord-tenant disputes; and assured better administration of contracts and leases. Additional reforms encouraged reclamation of abandoned land by providing lower taxes and rents on reclaimed land. Public administration was not efficient enough to enforce the first ordinances, and tenants and landlords both dragged their feet. In many cases, the word about the ordinances did not reach the "rice roots" levels, but improvements were made as the Government grew in influence.

a. The Government had eased much unrest among the peasants and bought valuable time with its limited success in lowering rents and improving contracts for tenants, but it had not solved the long-run problem of land distribution. Without land of their own, farmers would continue to be vulnerable to Communist subversion. Another ordinance promulgated in October 1956 prohibited anyone from owning more than 100 ha (247 acres) of riceland, plus 15 ha (37 acres) that was entailed land to pay the expenses of the family's ancestral cult, plus 30 ha that would be farmed by paid labor (no sharecropping or tenant labor). The Government would purchase all land in excess of the maximum and resell it in plots of 5 to 12 acres to incumbent tenants, then in order to descendants of soldiers killed or disabled in combat, refugees and those reclaiming their homes, the unemployed, owners of less than 1.2 acres who had more than five children, and the landless. The land would cost approximately 6 years' rent and could be purchased in six annual installments; interim ownership rested with the Government. The law applied only to ricelands and did not apply to communal ricelands.

b. Immediate help for the tenant farmers was needed, however, and the Government established the National Agricultural Credit Office

(NACO) to provide financial assistance for less usurious interest than the moneylenders charged. Assistance was extended to general agriculture, livestock, fishing, forest exploitation, and handicraft businesses. Interest limits of 1 percent a month were placed on short-term loans and of 6-8 percent a year on long-term loans. US$46 million had been lent by 30 September 1959, and production loans had permitted about 570,000 farmers to cultivate nearly 3.9 million acres. The success of this program and its value to the farmer are indicated by the fact that 94 percent of loans due had been repaid on 30 September 1959, and the 6 percent in arrears was expected to be recovered at the next harvest, even though 88 percent had been short-term loans made on a mutual confidence basis without any collateral other than the potential crop.

c. The land subject to redistribution totaled 1.1 million acres owned by Vietnamese (222,300 abandoned) and 654,000 acres (323,570 abandoned) owned by Frenchmen. The 1955 and 1956 ordinances reduced the attractiveness of landlordism, and the plan progressed despite setbacks and the disinclination of tenants to pay for abandoned land they had been farming rent free. By the time the program was completed in 1962, 609,043 acres had been sold to 115,381 farmers, mostly former tenants. Another 900 acres were allocated later, but the Government retained title to more than a million acres. Many of the strategic and "new life" hamlets were located on this Government land. The only real opposition to the land redistribution program was from Radio Hanoi and Communist insurgents in South Vietnam.

d. Land distribution, fair land tenure, and land development programs provided valuable agrarian reform, but much more was needed to take maximum advantage of the country's economic potential in agriculture. Increased production was equally important for pure economic growth. Fragmentation of landholdings creates large numbers of small businessmen, who can best solve the problems of production and marketing, in many instances, by cooperation. Two ordinances of August 1954 and March 1959 provided for cooperative associations with open membership, democratic management and control, rebate of surpluses to members according to the extent of their transactions, and limited interest on capital. There were 348 cooperatives with 79,000 members and capital of US$10 million scattered throughout the country by 1961. They comprised 142 agricultural, six forestry, four breeding, 80 fishery, 104 handicraft, and 12 consumer cooperatives. Founded on the principle of helping men to help themselves, each of them not only improved the economic positions of its members but contributed to better citizenry. Residual problems were the lack of enough land to employ all the farmers gainfully and of utilizing the full potentiality of available skilled artisans and professionals.

e. Much USOM financing had gone into agrarian reform, credit institutions, cooperatives, and land development. USOM concurrently encouraged and helped finance several other programs to strengthen the

agricultural sector. These programs included crop, livestock, and fishery development; agricultural extension services; and development of a National Agricultural College.

(1) The crop development program had a threefold purpose: to increase the variety of domestic production to reduce dependence on imports, to create a crop surplus for export, and to provide cash crops to increase farm incomes. Fiber production was introduced early, and important progress had been made in it in both Kenaf and Ramie by June 1959. It was expected to supply 100 percent of domestic needs by the end of 1960 and to enter the export market soon thereafter. Sugar production supplied 14 percent of domestic needs in 1959 and was expected to reach 90 percent by 1965. Production of corn, soybeans, sweet potatoes, and peanuts was most encouraging, and cocoa appeared to be a promising export commodity.

(2) Great progress was made in livestock development and animal husbandry. Ten poultry, four swine, and four cattle experimental stations were established and operating by June 1957 with encouraging results.

(3) Seven coastal fish-landing facilities and 11 freshwater fish hatcheries were constructed, and 75 cooperatives were founded with 10,590 members. Large expenditures were made to purchase and distribute needed fishing gear, and such heavy fishing equipment as marine engines was sold to fishermen on long-term low interest loans.

(4) Agricultural extension services included establishment of 4-H clubs, home improvement, and the traditional farm and production improvement programs. A definite improvement in production and in the general well-being of communities was credited to extension service efforts.

(5) All these activities increased the need for well-trained agricultural technicians. The long-term benefits of a good professional institution were recognized quickly by establishment of a National Agricultural College. A good physical plant was built, and a fine professional staff was training students in a 4-year college level program by the end of the 1957 school year. Enrollment increased from 160 in 1957 to 210 in 1958, and 350 students were expected for 1959.

31. Transportation facilities. Repair and rebuilding of the highway system was completed by June 1959 to the point where general transportation no longer was a problem. Construction equipment valued at more than US$13 million had been imported to accomplish the rebuilding, and two large US construction companies had been working incountry since 1957 on the larger construction tasks. Some major rebuilding and new construction was not completed; but a great deal of progress had been made in all cases, and completion was in view. The new Saigon-Bien Hoa

Highway was 61 percent finished, several other major projects were 30-89 percent complete, and all were expected to be finished by May 1961. Efforts at training Vietnamese as equipment operators and construction technicians had been very successful. All railway reconstruction was complete by 1959 except one 32 km coal mine spur. The original 1,337 km system was serviceable, and through traffic from Saigon to the 17th parallel was restored on 26 June 1959. Although some rolling stock had not been delivered, outstanding progress had been made in restoring the railroad system. Nearly 5.5 million cubic meters of fill had been dredged from the canals, and large portions of the waterway system were opened for the first time in 12 years between 1957 and 1960. Despite the large amount of work yet to be done, the system generally was operable and was contributing to increased commerce.

32. Industrial development. Although progress in the agricultural sector had been outstanding, industrial development had lagged. This is not surprising, since there was no real industrial base in South Vietnam to begin with.

a. Progress had been made in coal and cotton yarn production and sugar refining. A handicraft center established in 1957 contributed to substantial production gains in the ceramic, textile, bamboo and rattan weaving, silk screen printing, and small metal working trades.

b. Industrial equipment and machinery imported with USOM funds was valued at US$42.5 million in 1955, $29 million in 1956, $52 million in 1957, and $25 million in 1958. These imports were diversified among end products and production equipment ranging through the transportation, power, textile, aviation, communication, printing, food processing, chemical, commercial and industrial still and movie photography, woodworking, shipping, air-conditioning and refrigerating, construction, chemical, mining, paper, and leather industries in addition to office equipment and scientific instruments.

c. US aid to Vietnam between 1954 and 1958 totalled approximately US$956 million, 69 percent for military support, 9 percent for refugee aid, and 22 percent for economic and technical assistance. The refugee aid was for only the first 2 years. Eight percent of the money allocated to economic and technical assistance was used to develop a national police force; and 12 percent of the economic and technical assistance money was used to support rural resettlement, partly a refugee problem which was not finished until 1962.

d. The Government relied on counterpart funds to supply the bulk of its revenue, as it carried on activities that were far above its fiscal capability. The tax program was administered laxly, and more than half the tax revenue came from customs duties on imports that were paid with US aid dollars. The Government did not reinvest this

revenue but tended to build up its foreign and gold reserves; in effect, to hoard this resource at the national level. Vietnamese officials justified the large reserve, which grew from US$125 million in 1955 to US$183 million in 1959, as being needed to protect the economy in the event of withdrawal of US aid before economic independence was achieved.

e. A substantial margin of idle resources (money, labor, and technical know-how) which could have been mobilized for a development program was available within the economy in 1957. Potential additional skilled and semiskilled labor existed among the refugees who had come south in 1954, and the private sector not only had savings in the country but was transferring money out. The economy actually was growing, but the investment rate was well below that normally required by newly developing nations. Businessmen appeared to prefer hoarding their profits to investing them. The administrative procedures by which new enterprise was controlled actually were a deterrent to industrial development. Different licenses were needed to do business, to construct facilities, to import materials, to import equipment, and to pay for imports; special applications were required to obtain a loan or tax exemption; and each license or application required multiple approvals from a variety of Government agencies, which sometimes took months and even years to process them.

f. US aid made some economic development possible without substantial investment, and the general instability engendered little incentive for capital investment. This false economic growth may have lulled the Vietnamese and their American advisers into not seeing the real national urgency that existed: the rate of development indicated that the economy was heading for serious trouble. Net capital formation (net investment) had been only 1.8 percent in 1956 and increased only to 4.8 percent by 1960. In underdeveloped countries, 3 percent of the national income must be invested for each 1 percent of population increase for the economy to stand still. Vietnam's population growth rate of 2-3 percent would have required 6-9 percent investment of net national product to maintain economic equilibrium and 9-12 percent to attain a pure economic growth of 3 percent.

g. It was apparent by 1957 that the US money aid to Vietnam was not being converted into the proper resources, and imports of consumer goods which could be made in Vietnam damaged the few local industries. USOM made a modest effort at that time to stimulate domestic production and capital formation by trying to redirect aid imports from consumer to capital goods, but the Government seemed satisfied to import the industrial products needed rather than to increase domestic production. The value of imports of industrial machinery and equipment and raw materials, fuels, and other supplies essential for industry and agriculture was less than that of imports of other commodities in 1955 and 1956 and was not quite 32 and 15 percent greater in 1957 and 1958,

respectively. The Government expended little effort toward attaining economic independence and failed to initiate such important control measures as implementing effective tax, investment, and savings programs, at a time when greater public and private spending on economic development was needed to increase production and employment. The Vietnamese continued to consider US aid to be relief funds rather than an aid to economic growth, and used quick-selling consumer goods to hold down inflation and maintain the standard of living. The US aid program enabled the country to consume more foreign goods than the economy could afford, and only members of the middle and upper classes could afford to pay for them.

h. The exchange rate used for US aid funds was VN$35 to US$1; at the time the piastre was worth only about half that on the world market. Thus, the US taxpayer provided the Vietnamese Government with funds that would purchase about twice as much as they were supposed to, and many observers insist that the extra funds (about US$20 million a month) were diverted into the hands of a favored group. There is ample evidence that a significant amount of graft was collected, and the Communists used this allegation in propaganda against the Government. Massive US aid kept Diem in power, but some of his Vietnamese advisers believed that it actually harmed the country's economic growth and political stability.

33. Summary analysis. The French injected a philosophy of individualism into the basically agricultural family-oriented economy of Vietnam. The French-educated Vietnamese elite, having been cut off from the roots of their past by their learning, often lost contact with the village and the family. Without roots, which had made their lives meaningful, they drifted in an alien society. The gap between city and village grew wider as new economic opportunities developed which tended to increase the wealth of the rich without giving any compensating benefits to the poor.

a. Just as France had no blueprint for establishing an Asian empire, so it had no design for ruling one. Its administration swung between direct and indirect rule like a pendulum. French officials ruled closely, and Vietnamese opposition of every nature was firmly and effectively suppressed. The French brought with them a Western economy and administrative system that unintentionally but effectively disrupted the traditional framework within which the people had regulated their lives. In ending the Vietnamese Empire, the French failed to set up a more equitable one in its place.

b. They justified their encroachment into new territories in the name of "mission civilisatrice" (mission to bring French culture to less civilized territories). In trying to assimilate their colonial peoples culturally, they weakened many traditional Vietnamese patterns of political, economic, social, and intellectual life. The assimilation process

was felt with shock in every walk of life. The pattern of land distribution changed, and the gap between the rich and the poor widened. Population increases and the nonpractice of primogeniture miniaturized landholdings in Tonkin and Annam. As the old closed economy broke down and credit became more readily available, a large number of huge estates grew up in the north, which generally were acquired through usury. A number of Vietnamese landowners took advantage of the poverty of their countrymen to enlarge their personal holdings, and some became quite wealthy. The French did not cause any of these developments deliberately, but their unintentional disruption of the environment created the circumstances which bred them.

c. US aid and technical advice following the Indochinese War shored up the economy while Diem instituted needed reforms. The land development, redistribution, and resettlement programs were very successful in enabling landless peasants to acquire land and roots and in relieving the overcrowded conditions that had existed in the deltas. By 1957, the country had achieved reasonable political stability and relative military security, had reorganized the minimal industrial sector, was increasing agricultural output to prewar levels, and had an adequate distribution system. Foreign exchange reserves were rising, commodity stocks were high, the money supply and prices were falling, and unemployment was increasing; but the Government's draft Five Year Economic Development Plan never was implemented, and the lack of economic progress in 1957 was an adverse factor in internal security and political progress.

d. On the plus side, the general efforts of economic development, which included the many public work projects, employed large numbers of people. Efforts toward industrialization and increased activity in the import and domestic transportation industries created jobs; and outstanding advancements in technical and vocational training turned young people with aptitude into skilled workers and professionals who had no problem finding jobs. On the other hand, the predominantly agricultural background of most people caused them to cling to the underemployed rural life. They seemed to prefer the informalities of farming and the close family setting to the clockpunching, machine, and manager pace of industrial city life. The biggest flaw in the Government attempts to combat unemployment, however, appears to have been failure to develop industry sufficiently. Although there was obvious improvement in the labor situation, both in numbers employed and in the quality of skills, underemployment, and probably unemployment also, remained a problem in 1959.

e. Neither the private nor Government sectors were making satisfactory investment. The Government obviously was taking no effective action, but there was a structural problem. Increased Government expenditures would require additional taxes, increased taxes reduced consumption, and consumption at the grass roots level already was too low. The solution was twofold: to encourage the rich to invest or tax them and

invest the tax revenue and to assure that all possible revenues were invested. Neither was done. In 1960, the Government invested just over one-third of its foreign reserves.

f. As industrialization takes place, exports should rise and imports fall, because of substitution of domestic products for imports and availability of more products for export. South Vietnam's domestic industry did not decrease imports nor increase exports substantially by 1959. There were claims of obstacles to industrial development, such as lack of capital, technical and managerial skills, foreign investment, and confidence in the administration; US insistence on development of the economy through free enterprise; and opposition from some local businessmen. These obstacles were present in varying degrees but could have been overcome, if the will to make the necessary hard decisions had existed.

g. The lack of long-range economic planning and timely decisions to reprogram the use of aid and to carry out effective economic controls created conditions which, in turn, caused dissatisfaction and frustrations among various elements of the populace. The Communists used these conditions and reactions to them in their propaganda to enlist support in the insurgency against the Government. Specific conditions that the Communists exploited were lack of industrial development and unemployment, lack of protection of local industries against imports, need for an equitable tax system, poor living conditions for workers, and failure to build an independent economy. The segment of the populace most affected by the economic conditions cited in the propaganda was the peasants and the workers. It was this group that experienced the problems of unemployment and unequal distribution of wealth and that could least afford an unfair tax system. This situation not only created conditions conducive to conflict, but these elements of the populace became the source of part-time guerrillas.

CHAPTER 4

SOCIOLOGICAL FACTORS

Section I. Demography, Education, Religion.

34. Demography. The population of Vietnam in 1954 was about 25 million. When the Geneva Accords provisionally partitioned the country at the Ben Hai River (17th parallel), the north contained 62,000 square miles, 22 provinces, and about 13 million people under a Government headed by Ho Chi Minh. The south contained 65,000 square miles, 39 provinces, and about 12 million people under a Government headed by French-appointed Bao Dai. The mountain system that originates in Tibet and China extends through Yunnan Province (Communist China) about 750 miles into Vietnam. The Sip Song Chau Thai and Fan Si Pan Mountains in the northwest and the northern highlands east of the Red River along the Chinese border to the Gulf of Tonkin constitute about 85 percent of North Vietnam; and the Annam Cordillera (Chaine Annamitique) forms the border with Laos south of the 19th parallel and extends southeast to constitute about 60 percent of South Vietnam. These mountains are a formidable barrier to travel to and communicate with the interior, although erosion has created numerous passes that provide some access.

a. North Vietnam has a tropical monsoon climate. Summers are warm and wet, and winters are mild and dry with a mean temperature of 62° in Hanoi. The least rainfall (1.5 inches/month) occurs in the winter, but the high humidity caused by a relatively continuous drizzle permits farmers to grow a winter crop of rice in the deltas. South Vietnam has a mean temperature of 80° and a humid climate caused by consistently heavy annual rainfall. Monsoons influence the temperature and rainfall in all of Vietnam, coming from the south in the summer and the north in the winter, although the timing of the rainfall depends on the latitude and physical features of the area.

b. The Red River Delta, where most of the people of North Vietnam live, has one of the highest population densities in the world. Hanoi is centrally located in the delta and surrounded by typical jungle growth leading into the large forest areas in the mountains. Very little of the delta is more than 10 feet above sea level, and it often is flooded, sometimes to a height of 25 feet. Dikes and canals have been built through the centuries to contain the river and channel its waters into the rice fields. The rest of the lowlands south along the coast is limited in size but consists of extremely fertile alluvium which makes excellent riceland.

c. The highlands and plateaus that surround the Red River Delta are sparsely populated forest areas inhabited mainly by Mongoloid

minority tribal groups who produce rice and other crops. They farm the valley bottoms and higher levels, living in small villages in the clearings.

d. The central highlands of Vietnam are about 100 miles wide and 200 miles long and form the northern half of present-day South Vietnam. They are in the southern part of the Chaine Annamitique, which forms a natural barrier between the highlands and the Mekong Delta. The northern part is 600-1,600 feet high, except for a few much higher peaks and contains many farms and rubber plantations in bamboo and broadleaf forests. The southern part, which extends to about 50 miles north of Saigon, often is 3,000 feet high and supports crops familiar to temperate climates, such as coffee, tea, tobacco, and vegetables. It is sparsely settled, and the mountains are covered with forests of broadleaf evergreens at high elevations and bamboo along the lower slopes. The Montagnard villages in the highlands are either simple thatch-roofed bamboo houses built on pilings or extended-family longhouses surrounding a long communal house.

e. The central lowlands are along the coast from the Mekong Delta to North Vietnam, sometimes extending as much as 40 miles inland. They support rice (the chief crop) and sugar cane production, and fishing is an important industry. Two rice crops a year are grown in the extensive and fertile coast lowlands that extend about 250 miles south from Da Nang. The flat fertile area behind the sand dunes from Hue (50 miles north of Da Nang) to North Vietnam is intensely cultivated. Two types of villages predominate in the lowlands: the close-knit fishing villages in coves or bays along the coastal plain and the more dispersed nonfishing villages.

f. The Mekong Delta, built up by five branches of the Mekong and three smaller rivers, is about 26,000 square miles of very fertile level plain 10 feet or less above sea level and is the principal rice-growing area in Southeast Asia. The villages, which are built in regular patterns and usually enclosed by bamboo fences, often are built on the levees and dikes that were built for flood control. Tidal action varies greatly from place to place, sometimes being as high as 3 feet.

35. Education. Confucian emphasis on learning and filial obedience and the standing it gave to scholars were part of the educational system in Vietnam for 1,000 years before the French arrived. School facilities were not formal, but the curriculum was. Students who successfully passed any or all of the three increasingly rigdrous Mandarinate examinations were able to move up the social scale. When formal training was completed, students first took examinations in the provinces, then in the capital (Hue), and then in the Imperial Palace and were appointed as low-, middle-, or high-ranking Government officials depending on the level of the examination they had passed. Those who passed the palace examination were titled Doctors of the First Class, and they and their families were given

special privileges. Buddhist schools, also without formal facilities, were started by learned priests, and their teachings were held in esteem by the time Vietnam first became independent of China.

a. The French began introducing Western education in the last part of the 19th century and gradually replaced both the Confucian and Buddhist systems throughout Indochina. Six years of elementary school was followed by 4 years of lycee (comparable to high school) and 2 years of college, at which time an examination was given for a baccalaureate. Award of a baccalaureate made the student eligible to attend the University of Hanoi, which was established in 1917 and had colleges of medicine and pharmacy, fine arts, agriculture and commerce, and teaching by the 1930's. French was the language of instruction at all levels. Elementary education became compulsory by 1927, but only about 20 percent of the children of appropriate ages (406,660) was enrolled in all of Indochina in 1938. The percentages receiving secondary and university education were proportionately smaller.

b. The Vietnamese elite considered the French culture inferior; they refused to send their children to the early French schools. When they decided that Western political and social concepts were relevant to modernizing their society and that their children should be educated in schools where these subjects were taught, the influx of Vietnamese students rapidly overcrowded the French schools. The French were not eager to indoctrinate the Vietnamese in Western political and economic theories and refused to open more schools, so the Vietnamese started a private school system of their own to teach Western curricula. Colonial authorities closed many of the schools and imprisoned their mentors. The Vietnamese eventually requested French cooperation; protests and demands for educational reforms finally succeeded in getting the Colonial authorities to open new Franco-Vietnamese schools and to admit Vietnamese to the lycee in Hanoi.

c. The Viet Minh started building schools in each new area in which it gained control even before the end of World War II, to attempt to provide politically indoctrinated universal education. These schools alternated standard elementary subjects with classes in Communist ideology and rote-learning of Communist slogans. They also had facilities for learning animal husbandry and industrial and agricultural techniques. After Ho Chi Minh proclaimed the independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1945, all private schools (secular and religious) were absorbed by the State system.

d. North Vietnam has attempted unsuccessfully to uproot the deeply ingrained traditional concepts that education provides social prestige and economic advantage and to replace them with the goals of service to the Communist Party and its objectives. The Government's accomplishment of educating a greater percentage of the peasant/worker class than had been

customary and of diminishing the prejudices against education of women has not been an unqualified success either. Educated urban residents have no desire to work in the country, and rural residents do not want to stay in the country after they acquire an education.

e. President Diem established a Ministry of Education in the Republic of Vietnam which worked with UNESCO to develop and improve the educational system. Elementary schools contained five grades, and attendance for 3 years became compulsory although local school facilities often made the law unenforceable. Completion of the first five grades led to an examination for a Certificate of Primary Studies. Secondary education consisted of seven grades, and students had to pass an examination after the first four to become eligible for the second three. Successful completion of the difficult and selective baccalaureate examination that followed was necessary to enter institutions of higher education. Attendance at elementary and secondary schools more than doubled between 1955 and 1964. Technical and vocational schools on both levels have been built to train students in such subjects as applied arts, agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, music and drama, engineering, and marine navigation. The National Institute of Administration was established to provide competent civil servants for top-level local and national government positions. Education of the masses has not been an unmixed blessing. The traditional reverence for the scholar and intellectual has diminished, and education has become more a means of acquiring good jobs and social prestige. The latter have become harder to acquire by education as greater percentages of the total population become better educated. The few hundred 1955 graduates of the University of Hanoi had little difficulty finding appropriate jobs, but many of the 2,400 who graduated in 1962 were unable to do so.

f. Lack of decentralization of secondary and college level facilities plus the cost of tuition and books makes attainment of higher education impossible for most low income families. Montagnard children seldom receive any formal education for several reasons, among them the superstitious apprehension their parents have about reading and writing and the absence of any written alphabet for many dialects. The traditional Vietnamese reverence of education, regardless of the objective, had not motivated the average citizen by 1965 to take an active public interest in the educational system of community plans to improve it.

36. Religion and religious groups. The Vietnamese people had an intimate association with the supernatural world for centuries, and their animistic beliefs deified rivers, mountains, trees, and other natural objects with good and bad spirits which had to remain propitiated to prevent adverse happenings. Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism filtered into the Red River Delta from China about 111 B.C. For more than a thousand years, the concepts in classic Confucian literature directed the lives of the people. Mahayana Buddhism, which perceives Buddha as one of many

"enlightened ones," was the leading religion. Outstanding Buddhist scholars advised the Emperor, and Buddhism became accepted as the State religion during the Ly Dynasty (1009-1255). Later Ly rulers and the Tran Dynasty (1225-1440) encouraged Confucianism and Taoism to the disadvantage of Buddhism. Government officials were picked by public examination in classic Confucian studies after 1075. Prior to this era, Buddhist monks (bonzes) had been well educated and had been required to pass an examination to enter the priesthood. Their quality of education slowly degenerated until those of the 16th century usually were poorly educated and not particularly knowledgeable of their faith and its teachings.

a. Christianity was introduced in the 16th and 17th centuries by Spanish, French, and Portuguese missionaries. Confucian officials considered Catholic teachings to be corruptive of authority and imperialistic and persecuted the Catholics until the 18th century, when the French made Indochina a colony. The French supported Catholicism; under their aegis, the priests developed a Vietnamese clergy, provided education, and carried on charitable enterprises.

b. The Cao Dai, established early in the 20th century, is based on the doctrines of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism and the moral teachings of Christ; is influenced by the indigenous folk religions; and has adopted some of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. The Hoa Hao, established in 1939, is essentially a Theravada Buddhist movement, perceiving Buddha as the one great teacher but not as divine. Its activities and those of the Cao Dai moved into the political field rather rapidly and were strongly anti-Colonial.

c. A Buddhist revival in China in the 1920's gradually moved south into Vietnam. Regional associations were formed, supposedly to provide stricter discipline and standards for the priesthood, but the orientation of the movement soon turned political. World War II temporarily stopped the movement's expansion, but it resumed in 1958 with Hanoi as its focal point. Among other welfare and charitable projects, the Monks started schools, an orphanage, and a rehabilitation center for paraplegics during this renaissance.

d. Diem's rise to power brought the Catholics back into prominence in South Vietnam. Most of the key positions in the Government were held by Catholics, many of them educated and experienced refugees from the north. Many Catholic villages in North Vietnam packed up entirely after the partitioning and, led by the priests, moved in villages in the central highlands. They are staunch anti-Communist but remain relatively withdrawn from the southern-born Catholics.

e. American Protestant missionaries started working in the Mekong De'ta in 1911. When they were allowed to operate in the Annam Protectorate (1929), they concentrated on the Montagnards in the highlands. A

number of Portestants who fled North Vietnam were placed in three refugee villages. Islam probably has more adherents in South Vietnam than any other minority religion; Hinduists in the major towns usually are money-lenders; and there are some followers of Bahai.

f. The Government of North Vietnam gave lip service to the guaranty of religious freedom, but temples and pagodas soon were being converted to other uses. Adherents to Buddhist teachings were called reactionaries and timewasters. Between 500,000 and 800,000 Catholics fled to South Vietnam because of the hostility toward them. The church was required to use special tax forms, and the Government confiscated its land and harassed the clergy. A large portion of those who remained after the mass emigration and the many liquidations were Communists in public and Catholics in private to prevent further reprisals.

37. Communication. South Vietnam has a highly developed system of telecommunication between Saigon and the provinces that includes the most modern telephone, radiotelephone, telegraph, and other communication facilities.

a. News of interest to a village is disseminated orally by a highly effective "gossip" system centered on the Council House or some other communa building. The deputy village chief has a battery-powered radio and usually a copy of one of the Saigon newspapers for the village council or anyone else to read. Villagers visit the Council House daily and carry back outside news of interest in addition to local gossip. Each member hamlet of a village also has shops that serve as meeting places for both men and women in which news and gossip are exchanged while shopping or drinking with friends. News also can be disseminated to the village by posting it on single sheets on a wall.

b. A high illiteracy rate precludes using printed matter as a principal means of communication. Radio communication has a remoteness to villagers that does not apply to word-of-mouth communication in the village. Television, when available, reaches only the well-to-do and not the masses it must reach to spread ideas and innovations.

c. North Vietnam has a strong central broadcasting station in Hanoi and postal, telegraph, and telephone systems. The radio station extends its range through relay transmitters, and wired loudspeaker systems are used throughout the country. Hanoi Radio broadcasts in Vietnamese, English, Chinese, French, Khmer, and Lao.

Section II. Ethnic Groups.

38. General. The Vietnamese constitute about 85 percent of the population of Vietnam, and family lines cross the boundary between North and

South Vietnam. The largest minority groups are the Chinese and the Montagnards, the latter consisting of a number of Mongoloid tribal groups. Khmers and Chams (both originally from Cambodia), Indians, Pakistanis, Eurasians, and French and other Westerners make up the rest of the population of South Vietnam. Most of the remaining 15 percent of North Vietnam's population consists of tribal groups similar to groups in Laos, China, and other neighbors who live northwest of the Red River Delta and speak Sino-Tibetan, Austroasiatic, or Tai-Kadai languages. "Overseas" Chinese, Asians, and Europeans are present in small numbers. Vietnamese is the national language of both countries, and each has the identical problem of communication with the minority tribal groups--the Montagnards and the inhabitants of the highlands surrounding the Red River Delta, all of which are capable of communicating with their near neighbors but seldom learn much Vietnamese or other nontribal languages.

39. Vietnamese. The Vietnamese are a Mongoloid people from a kingdom in the south of China who emigrated farther south into the Red River Delta about 333 B.C. after losing several wars to the Chinese. They are physically smaller than most Europeans and Americans, averaging about 61 inches in height, and have characteristically Mongoloid features--straight black hair, broad faces, single-fold eyelids, round heads, high cheekbones, and light to medium brown skin. As they emigrated farther and farther south, they met and occasionally intermarried with the aboriginal Khmers from Cambodia who had ruled most of Indochina.

a. In North Vietnam, they are primarily wet-rice farmers and fishermen, professionals, skilled and unskilled workers, and clerical and management personnel. The role of the family has been eroded by the Government's creation of many organizations and activities outside family lines and discouragement of religious beliefs and practice.

b. In South Vietnam, they are mostly villagers who are rice farmers and fishermen. The educated elite are almost exclusively ethnic Vietnamese. The strong sense of ethnic identity they retain is based not on common national or racial characteristics but on a common historical heritage and language. The three major dialects of the north, the center, and the south are not immediately mutually intelligible and are so only within limits after people have some practice in them, but the greatest distinction between dialects exists in the villages. The language has been enriched through the centuries with Chinese and French words. The grammatical structure changed during the French period, because of the widespread use of French by the elite and in the schools, but most scientific and technical terms were adopted from Chinese. The language was written with Chinese ideographs, then pieces of ideographs came to mean certain sounds in a phonetic script, and finally it was written in Roman letters with many diacritical marks. Some syllables are whole words with different meanings indicated by the tone in which they are spoken.

40. Highland tribes.

a. The minority groups of the highlands of North Vietnam originally were a dark-skinned, long-headed people to which were added the short, light-skinned, wavy-haired characteristics of the modern Indonesian. Later invasions by Mongoloid tribes from China added their physical characteristics. More than a dozen languages and numerous dialects are spoken in the highlands, but their geographic distribution is unknown. The highlanders feared the Vietnamese would expand into the lands they inhabited and were openly hostile or, at best, reserved toward the ethnic Vietnamese. The North Vietnam Government has made a concerted effort to make the highlanders and other ethnic minorities feel they are "North Vietnamese" and to make them identify somewhat with the country as a whole rather than just with their own tribes or groups. It has attempted to eradicate usage of words like moi (savage) or Montagnard and carefully calls them national minorities in all official statements and papers. It also has established two relatively autonomous areas in which local Government is accomplished by People's Councils with proportionate representation for each group.

b. The Montagnards of South Vietnam are the ethnic tribal groups that inhabit the highland regions. They constitute about 5 percent of the population but inhabit about 60 percent of the total land area. They inhabited the fertile coastal valleys until they were driven inland when the Kingdom of Champa came into being in the third century. The most significant tribes among them are the Rhade, Jarai, Mnong, and Stieng in the south and the Katu, Bahnar, and Sedang in the north. The benefits of Indian and Chinese civilizations did not reach into the highlands; only conflict reached there from the lowlands, making the tribes wary of incursions by any would-be conquerors or governments. Approximately 30-40 dialects of Mon-Khmer of Malaya-Indonesian languages are spoken by the Montagnards.

(1) The Stieng, or Budnip, inhabit several provinces on the western border; a much greater number live in Cambodia. Most of them speak only Stieng (Bahnaric subgroup of Mon-Khmer), some learned French on plantations, and some speak Vietnamese. The Stieng territory, with much dense jungle and flat grassland, is relatively close to the lowlands and crossed by two National Routes. Many Stieng villages were resettled in the lowlands to get them out of the Viet Cong infiltration routes. They were not pleased to be resettled, apparently because they don't care which way the war goes so long as they are left alone. They are patrilineal and govern their own villages with their headmen and councils of elders.

(2) The Mnong are seminomadic people who engage in dry-rice farming in the uplands and wet-rice farming in streambeds and on lake shores. They live in the southern ranges of the highlands in the forests between Da Lat and the Lac Thien basin. They speak Mon-Khmer dialects

and are well-known for their feuding and raiding. Neither their villages nor their houses follow a set pattern. They are not friendly to outsiders, although they engage in commerce with them. They are matrilineal, and the nuclear family is the basic economic unit. They normally clear and cultivate an area for only 1 year, and move their villages frequently for many reasons.

(3) The Jarai live mostly on the Darlac plateau in the southern mountains. They are Malaya-Polynesians with light brown to black skin and broad noses and are well-built and taller than many other Montagnards. They are matrilineal, and the extended family is the basic economic unit. The strong influence of the ancient kingdom of Champa shows in their speech. Intermarriage with Rhade has created subgroups of Jarai. Few have learned Vietnamese because of the limited contact they have had with the lowlanders, but many speak French. They are governed locally by their councils of elders and headmen.

(4) The area inhabited by the Rhade centers on Ban Me Thuot in Darlac province and spreads east into the coastal provinces of Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa and west through Quang Duc province into Cambodia. The Rhade have participated more in public affairs than any other Montagnard group. The percentage of educated Rhade with administrative or technical experience makes this group a leader in Montagnard movements. It is matrilineal, and the clan is the basic economic unit. A clan is a group of lineages, each consisting of three or four generations of descendants of a common ancestress. Marriage between clan members is forbidden. The eldest woman of the senior line is the po lan (proprietor) of the clan's land but cannot sell it without the consent of all the notables. Their villages usually are small clusters of longhouses on pilings near a water source, although some contain as many as 70 longhouses. Each house is inhabited by one extended family: the senior woman, her husband, daughters and their husbands, grandchildren, and unmarried sons. Separate internal compartments house each nuclear family. The husband is the head of the longhouse, and men have sociopolitical importance in the clan. Rhade are animistic and sacrifice cattle and fowl to the spirits.

(5) The Katu inhabit a rugged, thickly forested area from the Laos border to about 15 miles west of Hoi An and Da Mang. They are dark-skinned and well-built and average about 65 inches in height. They are seminomadic and fine hunters and trappers; they store their kill in bamboo tubes after salting it. They have often warred against other tribes to obtain food and slaves, although they also have formed alliances with neighboring tribes. They are patrilineal, and the extended family is the basic economic unit. Their villages are built around a bachelor's house which serves as a communal building for village life. Polygyny is permitted but seldom practiced. Katu is a Mon-Khmer language.

(6) The Sedang (or Xo-dang) are slash-and-burn cultivators who inhabit an area northwest of Kontum toward the Laos-Cambodia borders. They speak several dialects of Sedang, a Bahnaric subgroup of Mon-Khmer but have no difficulty in understanding among dialects. Many learned to speak French in schools established in their territory during the French regime, and many now also speak Vietnamese. Sedang has no written form. They are very zealous about remaining independent and fought violently against French efforts to take over their area. It is not known whether they are patrilineal or matrilineal, but each longhouse has a woman as its ritual chieftain. Only she may cook the rice in her half of the household; it must be carried to the other half. The Sedang engage in dry-rice farming in which each member shares. Each family has its own wet-rice paddy where possible, and kitchen garden in which only immediate family members share. The Sedang often mine iron ore between rice seasons and make tools for sale as well as for their own use.

(7) The Bahnar engage in agriculture and some animal husbandry in the rugged mountain area that extends from the western part of Binh Dinh province into the northern part of Pleiku and the southeastern part of Kontum provinces. Catholic missionaries developed a written form of Bahnar (Mon-Khmer subgroup) based on Roman letters during French rule. Many Bahnar speak French, and some speak English. They are shorter than most Montagnards, averaging about 57 inches in height, and have bronze skins, high cheekbones, broad noses, and dark hair. They were friendly and cooperative with French administrators and missionaries, but their attitude toward their neighbors swung between hostility and friendliness; they raid other tribal areas, but they also intermarry with neighboring tribes. They are dry-rice farmers who share hunting, fishing, and agricultural areas and products with other villages formed into a unit called a toring. They supplement their rice diet with vegetables and meat. Domestic animals are owned by the village, which usually is enclosed with barbed wire. They are animistic and blame epidemics, wild animal attacks, and any other disaster on the spirits of the dead. They raise their buildings 6 feet or so off the ground with pilings to keep out the wild animals. Villages normally contain family houses, a bachelor house that serves as the communal building, and granaries. Villages are governed by an elected council of elders and a headman appointed by the council.

41. Chinese.

a. Many Chinese, the largest foreign minority in North Vietnam, fled to the south in 1954. Two culturally dissimilar Chinese groups remain. The lesser group lives in small settlements in the highlands near the Chinese border and is descended from traders who came there from south China. Many have intermarried with highland minority groups and are totally assimilated. They work as merchants in regional markets or farm the hilly land. The larger group lives in the major cities and

is very active in commerce. The Chinese in North Vietnam have resisted DRV efforts to involve them in highland development programs.

b. There are 15 Chinese in the south for every one in the north. Most of them are concentrated in Cho Lon, and the rest also usually live in other urban centers. They maintain a higher order of ethnic autonomy in both architecture and language, even though most native-born Chinese speak Vietnamese. They are fragmented politically, geographically, and linguistically; are diverse in education, occupation, and financial status; and have no apparent effective organization among the urban centers they inhabit.

42. Khmers. The Khmer Kingdom encompassed most of Indochina in the 12th century. A sizable group of Khmers came under Vietnamese rule when the latter acquired control over the Mekong Delta area in the 18th century. The 350,000-400,000 Khmers in South Vietnam are concentrated generally between Saigon and the Cambodian border in Tay Ninh (northwest), Phy Vinh (south-southwest), and An Xuyen (southwest on the Ca Mau Peninsula) provinces. They are slightly taller and darker than the Vietnamese, have less Mongoloid eyes, and often have wavy hair. They have remained insulated from the Vietnamese; many still retain their alien status. They are not especially militant about defending their cultural identity, but they defended their own villages under several regimes, and local militia still defends their territory against North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces. They patently avoid any confrontation with their Cao Dai or Hoa Hao neighbors and always seek accommodation with incumbent Governments. Many have fled to Combodia to escape the terrorism since the conflict reached into their area. They speak Khmer (Cambodian), the main eastern language of the Mon-Khmer family. They have had a written language since the sixth century, but it never has been successfully Romanized. They use both cuneiform and cursive scripts and are an important linguistic minority.

43. Chams. The once-great Kingdom of Champa encompassed the coastal plains of Indochina from the Red River Delta to the Mekong Delta from the third to the 15th century. Its people, closely related ethnically to the Khmers and Cambodians, were decimated by the Vietnamese in their long emigration to the south. The Chams have since intermarried with Malaya-Indonesian peoples and have been influenced culturally by their Indian and Khmer neighbors. About 35,000 remained in 1955. Their villages are scattered along the central coast near Phan Rang and Hao Da and near the Cambodian border around Tay Ninh and Chau Phu. Most Chams follow the ancient Brahmanist religion and are believers in high caste Hindu orthodoxy; the rest are Muslims. Cham villages are easy to identify by their low palm houses and complete lack of trees--they believe it is harmful to live in the shade. Their superstitions and belief in witchcraft tend to reinforce their isolation from ethnic Vietnamese. They are matrilineal: the women select their husbands, name their children, and inherit property.

The men are charged with village duties, and a son occasionally will be left some property.

44. Intergroup differences. Regionalism was sure to become a deterrent to national cohesion because of the strong penchant of the Vietnamese for a confining and restrictive village life. The Champa Kingdom was a great civilization before the Vietnamese started their long and historic advance to the south, and the Khmers had ruled most of the rest of the Indochina Peninsula. The 1,000-year southern migration of the Vietnamese caused many conflicts and eventually gave the French an excuse to move in and create the Tonkin and Annam Protectorate and the colony of Cochin China. This action naturally created three regionally oriented subcultures.

a. The ethnic Vietnamese of the Red River Delta in Tonkin were the leaders in the Protectorate and still consider themselves the born leaders of all Vietnam. The French entered Cochin China first, and its people were the most influenced culturally by them. The Annamese had the least contact with the French and have remained the most traditionalist of the three groups. Nearly every organized group has its Tonkinese, Annamese, and Cochin Chinese cliques. Each region attempted to maintain a regional balance in advantage, preference, and influence.

b. The large numbers of northern Vietnamese who came south after 1954 still are only partially integrated into southern society, and the northerner/southerner relationships placed severe strains on the socio-political makeup of the Government of South Vietnam. Part of the divisiveness and resentment is directly traceable to the proud heritage of the Annamese from the days when the Emperors ruled the land from the imperial city of Hue.

c. In addition to the differences among the three political regions, the highland dwellers resented intensely the incursions of the lowlanders and their attempts to govern the highland tribes. The French were preferred by the highlanders because of the hands-off policy the colonial Government forced on the ethnic Vietnamese. Only one minority group in the north highlands supported the Viet Minh against the French. Many groups were used as local militia to carry out police and border patrol duties. Many also supported the French in the Indochinese War, and some fought alongside the French to the end.

d. The willingness of the southern highland dwellers to fight the Viet Minh or Viet Cong was not based on ideology but on their fundamental dislike of the ethnic Vietnamese. This hatred could easily be turned against the RVN Government, and any pleas for nationalism or loyalty to a central Government would fall on deaf ears. The Montagnards prefer to remain outside the mainstream of Vietnamese society.

e. The Chinese, with their economic power and demonstrated industriousness, are despised by ethnic Vietnamese and often have been

discriminated against by the Government. Consequently, the Chinese isolate themselves as much as circumstances will permit and have little or nothing to do with Vietnamese social or political life. Their desire to protect their vested interests in the business world is paramount and precludes their taking a major role in the political world.

f. Ethnic Vietnamese consider the Khmers and Chams to be culturally inferior. The latter prefer to isolate themselves from Vietnamese society, retaining their own cultural, religious, and racial makeup and resisting any further degradation of their heritage.

g. The religious strife between Buddhists and Catholics has had a deleterious effect on development of an effective Government bureaucracy that will represent all ethnic groups efficaciously at all levels. Only the Catholics had enough group cohesiveness and political competence to take over and fill the governmental void left by the departure of the French in 1954. The Catholics were French-oriented and many no longer were attuned to the realities of Vietnamese culture, but the Ngo family's Mandarin heritage and anti-French sentiments enabled it to invest its actions with the saving motivation of patriotism rather than Catholicism. The Buddhists and Catholics have had a disproportionate hold on the reins of Government since Diem's administration. Antagonisms among religious groups coupled with traditional regionalism have served to create divisiveness and to develop and widen schisms that can benefit only the Communists.

h. Catholics are widely resented among ethnic Vietnamese for their self-imposed social and cultural isolation and their past record of political strength. Strong relationships developed between the Vietnamese aristocracy and Catholic missionaries in the 200 years before the French conquered Indochina, and their empathy continued during the Colonial era. Ethnic Vietnamese came to believe that some degree of conversion to Catholicism was necessary to better themselves politically or socially. Although Vietnamese Catholics no longer monopolize Government, a strong current of anti-Catholic sentiment remains and is fed by the Buddhists. Buddhists attack the Government for corruption and the lack of Buddhist participation in policymaking, but apparently have no desire to prevent constructive suggestions, hold public office, or assume any official responsibilities. They are concerned, however, with any policy decisions that may affect their religious beliefs, freedom, and economic or social status; and the monks are especially alert to protest against any such decisions.

i. Ho Chi Minh consolidated his position in North Vietnam in 1954-56 and then took the course that all new Communist regimes seem to consider essential. Under the guise of emancipation from French Colonial rule, he embarked on a program against a minority group of his own people. Those who opposed his rule or appeared to oppose it were killed. Blacklists

contained many names of people who were neither wealthy nor reactionary; many were subsistence farmers who owned less than an acre. Communist teams would arrive in an area with a quota of death and imprisonment sentences which they invariably carried out. As the Viet Minh selected individuals and executed them or used terrorists tactics (such as blowing up whole families to eliminate one individual), the people began to flee south. Ho's forces put down a peasant uprising through sheer brutality, and as many as 100,000 people were reported killed before the purge was finished. His actions obviously had caused a major social change in North Vietnam.

Section III. The Family.

45. Traditional mores. The traditional ethnic Vietnamese family system is basically similar throughout Vietnam regardless of local variances, because it is based on a cultural heritage acquired 3,000 or more years ago from common ancestors in the south of China. It was and still is based on Confucianism. The Vietnamese who first crossed the border into the Red River Delta and migrated slowly south until they reached the southern tip of the Ca Mau Peninsula considered the family group much more important than the individual.

a. The family group included not only living members but five generations of ancestors and three of progeny in addition to the eldest living generation. Minor variants reckon lineage through the seventh or only through the third ascending generation. Economy, religion, and education are all part of the functions and come under the aegis of the family. Members of a household lived, worked, were married and buried, and celebrated together as a family. Every occasion of any importance was a family function. A man went to a kinsman when in trouble or in need of advice and considered the effects on his kinsmen of any decisions he made. It was important to honor one's ancestors (they might lose the benevolence toward the family if not honored) and to have sons to assure that one's own spirit would be properly cared for after death and to perpetuate the lineage. Filial piety, loyalty, benevolence, justice, and propriety are the basic values in the Vietnamese family.

b. The village was important, but it was only a collection of families; the nation was only a collection of villages and proportionately less important. Exile from one's village was a terrible enough punishment, but banishment from the family sentenced one's soul to wander homeless and uncared for throughout enternity. Buddhism's teachings that a person is successively reincarnated until the soul acquires enough merit, through virtuous conduct while living, to end the birth-death cycle and permit the soul to enter nirvana is the primary basis for this concept.

46. Patrilineage. Vietnamese families are patrilineal. Lineage is traced only through males, and only males inherit. A wife adopts her husband's clan and lineage, and it is her husband's lineage that venerates her soul after death. Rank goes from the eldest son to the eldest son (individuals in each family are ranked by age and sex within each generation). Traditionally, the eldest male in the lineage or in the senior branch of the lineage is the lineage head. A variant in some parts of the south permits a council of all adults in the lineage to elect the man it considers most competent to be the lineage head. The lineage head maintains the genealogy book, maintains the family tombs, carries out the main cult rituals, manages the cult land and income from it, and advises family members. In clans that do not elect the lineage head, the position passes to the eldest son; if there is no son, it may pass to the head of a collateral branch of the family.

47. The household. The normal household consists of the members of a three-generation extended family. Thus, a married couple, their unmarried children, and their eldest son and his family live under one roof. A southern variant puts the youngest son and his family in the household instead of the eldest. Second and younger sons usually move out when they marry. All household members are under the nominal authority of the senior parent, and all contribute to the household income. Households consisting of only nuclear families are becoming more common among educated urbanites. Poor security conditions engendered in rural areas by guerrilla and conventional warfare also have tended to break up the traditional family patterns.

a. The women in the household are respectful toward the men but remain distinct individuals. Many of them exercise a strong influence on the men and the household as a whole. They assume responsibility for cultivation of the family fields and often engage in retail trade for the family. Concubinage once was customary, and polygyny still is practiced in rural areas, even though it was made illegal in 1959. Second or third wives are selected with the consent of the first wife and usually are placed in separate households of their own or stay in their parents' households.

b. Family decisions are made by the lineage head, although the responsibility more recently has devolved on the family household head. Unquestioned obedience is demanded and received from the younger generations. Brides are completely submissive to their husbands, but the husbands invite their wives' council more and more as time passes. Urban husbands accept their wives as intellectual equals and include them in most discussions. Wives in both urban and rural areas manage the family income; and some own agricultural estates, businesses, or factories.

c. Mothers are very protective of their unmarried daughters' reputations. Extramarital and premarital sexual involvement is disapproved

of, and a woman who acquires a bad reputation disgraces the whole family. Premarital and extramarital chastity for males is nominally expected.

48. Marriage. The importance attached to perpetuation of the lineage makes marriage more of a social contract than a personal relationship, although sons often select their brides themselves. Marriages must be arranged by an intermediary, and a ritual exchange of visits normally is made during which each side assesses the other.

a. Blood lines and family reputations are more important considerations than looks, talents, or personal feelings. Parents naturally prefer wealthy husbands for their daughters, but family and character are very important. Some families with no sons will even select a poor man of good character who promises to become part of the girl's family and be responsible for the cult of the ancestors for her family. A final important consideration is a proper match of the young people's horoscopes. Children marry younger in the more affluent families than in those whose economic conditions may require postponement to a later age.

b. The Confucian ritual for acquiring a wife is basically the same throughout the country. Once the bride has been selected, the intermediary recommends the union to the bride's family and, if the proposal is tentatively accepted, compares the young people's horoscopes. If he is turned down by the girl's family, negotiations stop immediately and some face-saving excuse is made to the man's family. If the marriage is acceptable and the horoscopes match well enough, the young man's family visits the girl's family with presents on a day the astrologer has determined to be auspicious. They are invited in and served refreshments while they observe the girl, her family, and her home. If all goes well, the girl and her family are invited to the young man's home. If both families agree to the match, the horoscopes are consulted to determine the day on which the engagement will be announced. This ceremony is held primarily to inform the ancestors of both families of the impending event, and takes place at both households. Any piece of jewelry or other valuable article is acceptable as the betrothal gift. Customs in the south have changed somewhat, and the engagement usually is announced at a party to which friends as well as relatives are invited. Dowry arrangements are completed later, and the wedding ceremony is held a few months later on a date determined by an astrologer.

c. The young man's family moves in a formal procession to the girl's house. The rank within the family determines the position of the individual in the procession. After tea is served, the father of the bride or another elderly male relative informs the ancestors that the bridegroom has arrived to claim the bride. The bridegroom bows low before the altar three times, the bride follows suit; then the couple kneels before the bride's parents and each of her elder relatives. Everyone now moves to the bridegroom's house where the ceremony is repeated for his ancestors.

d. In some areas, the bride returns to her parent's home after the marriage is consummated and waits for her husband to come get her. If he brings an intact roast pig, all is well. If the pig is minus an ear, the bride was not a virgin and the marriage is off.

e. A law was passed in 1959 that requires posting banns for 10 days, a civil ceremony, and recording the marriage in the civil register. Rural families, however, seldom obey this law and attach much greater significance to the religious ritual.

49. Children. Children are very necessary to the Vietnamese family as family workers, but sons are most important as perpetuation of the lineage and assurance that the cult of the ancestors will be maintained. If there are no children or only girls, the son of a younger brother (preferably but not necessarily) may be adopted.

a. Several ceremonial feasts at which offerings are made to the ancestors follow the birth of a child. The child is given a name that may represent its rank among the siblings or may represent some attribute the parents hope it will have. The family name is followed by the middle and first names in the Chinese fashion. If a first-born son has died, the second may be given a less propitious name to fool the malevolent spirits in an attempt to assure his good health.

b. Early childhood is a period of little restraint and much love and attention. Boys and girls are reared differently from about age 5, at which time the superiority of the male begins to be established. All children start working in the ricefields as soon as they are able; many attend school for at least a few years. All older members of the family help in the children's upbringing, and family and teachers both instruct the children in their duties to their parents and family. All children must be respectful to their parents and other older people and must honor the memories of their ancestors by maintaining the ancestral cult.

50. The ancestral cult. Elderly people are nurtured in the bosoms of their families. They spend most of their time visiting or entertaining friends, if the family can afford it, and providing sage council for younger family members. Traditional mourning follows a death, and all members of the family (and friends and neighbors) bring offerings to the mourning household and perform obeisance in honor of the deceased.

a. The cult of the ancestors requires that a piece of land be designated legally as the ancestral home. The lineage head is responsible for maintaining the necessary rituals, and uses the income from cultivation of the ancestral home to pay for the celebrations and for upkeep of the tombs. The lineage head may keep any excess income, but it must go to his designated heir when he dies. If there is no male heir or the land is expropriated, the obligation ends.

b. Tet, the beginning of the lunar year, also requires celebrations and ancestral honorings. The first day of Tet is dedicated to repairing family tombs, usually followed by a family picnic on the food offerings that were made to the spirits and the ancestors or by a feast at home with guests. The souls of the ancestors depart on the fourth day. The spirit of the hearth also leaves during Tet to report his daily observations of the family to the Emperor of Jade; his departure is celebrated appropriately. The spirit and the souls of the ancestors return on the seventh day, and the evil spirits must be kept out of the house and out of the way of their return. A family meal marks the end of the new year celebration.

Section IV. Social Structure.

51. Historical background. Vietnam's society was relatively static and conservative for centuries. It had been based primarily on Confucian values, regardless of religious practices, until the arrival of the French. The basic tenet was universal order; everything was controlled by natural principles, and all must be in harmony. The person in closest harmony with these natural principles, the son of heaven, was the Emperor who governed mankind. Morally superior scholars were officials who helped the Emperor govern. The people obeyed the officials, the officials obeyed the Emperor, and the Emperor obeyed heaven. Confucianism taught benevolent love, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness. The Vietnamese also believed in magic and the supernatural and revered and feared the spirits and souls that people the world of most animistic societies. Rice farming was the base of the social order, and village social units were responsive to rules of conduct prescribed by unit members. Formal administration was accomplished by the Mandarins who were the Emperor's advisers.

a. Vietnam still was an agrarian society with social position based on land wealth when the French arrived. The Emperor ruled through civil servants who constituted an intellectual elite. The Emperor had abolished the old nobility, which had hereditary titles and owned large land grants received from the Emperor, and had replaced it with an honorary nobility. Its members were people who had been rewarded with a title for performing special services for the Emperor. Anyone could receive a title (royal blood was not a prerequisite), and the award of the title included only a token land grant, if any. The title did not invest the holder with any special privileges or power, and they lasted only five generations. The title did give holders prestige in their own local communities, but national prestige was based on the individual's land wealth or his position in the Government. Only the Emperor and his royal family had permanent hereditary positions by then. Blood or marriage relation to the royal family did not confer status or formal prerogatives. The only

true elite, other than the Emperor's family, consisted of classical scholars who were selected by competitive examination. Once a candidate had passed the examinations and was accredited as a scholar, he became eligible for appointment to an official position. All important positions were held by scholars, even military positions.

b. Mandarins were appointed by the Emperor as his personal representatives and, as such, carried the prestige and power of the court with them wherever they served. No Mandarin's son could become a Mandarin without passing the examinations, and any commoner could become a Mandarin the same way. Children of Mandarin families, however, had much easier access to the education in classical literature and philosophy that was needed to pass the examinations than children of commoners. As a result, the Mandarin families became a self-perpetuating elite of professional governors and the most cohesive and powerful group in Vietnam.

c. Rural societies and social structures changed little when urban society began to turn toward modernization during the French colonial period. As Vietnamese acquired French educations and began to expand private enterprise and take advantage of technological development, a new upper class of wealthy liberals and individualists began to replace the Mandarin elite. Cochin China was administered by a French Governor, French civil servants, and French-educated Vietnamese; and the Vietnamese courts were replaced with French courts. The Emperor continued to govern Annam and Tonkin nominally, but the French appointed a French resident-superior in the capital, a resident in each province, and eventually an administrator in each Ministry. From this stage, it was a short step to appointing another member of the royal family as Emperor whenever the incumbent Emperor displeased the French.

52. The urban sector. Entry into the new intellectual elite that replaced the Mandarinate was based on education in subjects taught by Western school systems rather than education in Chinese classics. It encompassed Government administrators, doctors, lawyers, teachers, journalists, engineers, and other professions. The distribution pattern of wealth also changed, as the French granted large landholdings in Cochin China to companies and individuals as part of its land development program. Many Tonkinese and Annamese who held these grants became far wealthier than any Vietnamese had been in the past. All landholdings of more than 100 hectares (247 acres) were in the hands of approximately 2,000 Vietnamese and 430 French owners by the 1950's. These absentee landlords of Cochin China were much wealthier than landlords in Tonkin and Annam; they had become urban-oriented, and most of them lived in Hanoi and Hue. They became even more Westernized and started investing in business and industrial enterprises. These undertakings further alienated them from the less wealthy landowners who were forced by economics to stay on their land.

a. An upper middle class developed as a result of the demand for administrative and management employees and minor officials for French Government and private activities. French development of mining, transportation, and manufacturing industries also created a worker class. Hanoi and Haiphong became the leading industrial centers, primarily because most of the natural resources were in the north, and a large labor supply was readily available locally. The agricultural orientation of the farmer-laborers in those businesses made them an unreliable work force until sometime in the 1930's. They considered anything other than farming to be only a temporary occupation and returned to village life without warning at every opportunity. The same situation existed to a greater extent in Cochin China, where laborers were needed by the newly developed rice, rubber, tea, and coffee plantations and where labor was scarce. The French imported workers for the plantations from Tonkin and Annam all during the 1920's and into the early 1930's.

b. A great expansion of the Chinese population resulted from French activities in Vietnam. The relatively small Chinese sector of the society conducted most of the trade that existed when the French arrived. French encouragement of rice exports caused the first influx of Chinese merchants and shopkeepers; then the French imported Chinese laborers for its road and rail construction programs. Many Chinese progressed from working as laborers on French or Vietnamese plantations to owning tea and pepper plantations of their own, and some started rice plantations. As rice production and exports rose, the Chinese acquired a monopoly in rice milling. They built the first rice-husking factory in 1878 and had 11 in Cho Lon by World War I. As the Chinese populace increased, it became active in all sectors of the economy: domestic and foreign trade, handicrafts, finance, light industry, sugar refining, nut oil extraction, shipbuilding, manufacturing, and truck-gardening. Many Chinese owned hotels and restaurants in urban areas. Regardless of the type of activity in which they were engaged or the amount of wealth they had amassed, they were not accepted by the Vietnamese as social equals. The Chinese have maintained their cultural distinctness and even their architecture; Cho Lon looks much more Chinese than Vietnamese. Many Chinese have married Vietnamese, however, and the Government now insists that the children of such marriages are Vietnamese so long as one parent was born in Vietnam.

c. When Vietnam declared its independence in 1954, Vietnamese at the top of the native administrative-economic structure moved into the vacated leadership positions. In addition to these Westernized intellectuals, the urban upper class also included religious leaders; wealthy businessmen, industrialists, and landowners; and the top military leaders. The whole structure of society in North Vietnam was upset when the Communists came to power, and the usual "classless" Communist society evolved, in which party leaders and some intellectuals become the elite.

53. The rural sector. The village is the most significant unit of Vietnamese society. The vast majority of the people live in the villages, which were autonomous for centuries and still maintain much the same status. The Government of the Emperor, which respected village autonomy, was represented by the village council of elders. The council sometimes was elected and sometimes was made up of members who inherited their positions (and was all male or all female depending on the practices of the tribal group concerned); theirs was the final authority. Their responsibilities and authority were derived as much from tradition as from administrative legislation and included keeping records; advising on laws and regulations, the village budget, and police matters; and inspecting village services.

a. An important part of most village life is the service to the village guardian deity. The altar to this spirit is in the cult temple, which doubles as a community center, and the officials of the cult (elected lay officials) are honored notables.

b. The villagers had minimal contact with any central Government for centuries and developed little feeling of nationalism. The individual's commitment was first to his family and then to the council of elders of his village. He still appears to be somewhat indifferent to what goes on beyond his world of the hamlet and village. The years of conflict and its attendant movement of outsiders through once-isolated areas have taught the villager to adapt his culturally-derived attitudes to changing situations. Even so, his relationship with nonvillagers is a direct function of how much influence the nonvillager can exert on the villager's daily life.

54. Social mobility. The only basis for moving up socially was the Mandarinate examinations for centuries, and it was very difficult for farm families to provide their children with the classical education that was necessary to be able to pass the examinations. Despite the significant increase in the size of the urban working class, the vast majority of the people continued to farm small plots or toil as tenant farmers in the traditional patterns of Indochina. Diem's resettlement programs improved the economic situations of some families, but not enough to make any difference in their social positions. Land ownership still is the primary measure of success in rural areas. Even the land development programs that opened heretofore uncultivated lands were not able to make a large landholding available for each family.

a. A farmer's chance to move up socially is hampered seriously by too large a family. A fairly large-sized holding can be dissipated through fragmentation among survivors, for primogeniture is not practiced in Vietnam. Thus a village farmer remains a village farmer, and he has little chance of enabling any of his children to move up socially, except through providing them with enough education to enter a

profession or Government service. Since secondary and college level education still is relatively expensive in Vietnam, the village child who manages to acquire a college education will remain the exception.

b. The upper class of the village includes teachers, priests, bonzes, and all educated persons. Provincial civil servants who are upper class in the rural areas could not qualify as upper class in urban areas. Province chiefs, however, are upper class by city standards.

Section V. Public Health.

55. Traditional medicine. Medicine and public health are closely related to the social and cultural aspects of Vietnamese life. The medical style tends to be simplistic and based on general religious-philosophical principles rooted deep in Vietnamese heritage. Medicine and public health, like other sociocultural aspects of life, date back to Chinese origins.

a. There were two distinct yet closely related styles of medicine: sorcery and oriental herb medicine. The sorcerers, or healers, are practitioners who have received special powers from their patron deity to meet and exorcise evil spirits. Amulets and bleeding are common cures, but the most widespread practice is prevention of illness by specified ritual.

b. The Chinese doctor is more sophisticated, knowledgeable, and practical. He is a scholar who knows and uses several methods of curing illness. The most popular method is based on the experience and teachings of many generations in the use of herbs, spices, and other medicinals; it is not unlike the methods of a country pharmacist. Another method is to maintain harmony throughout the body by such diverse and sometimes painful practices as acupuncture (insertion of various kinds of needles into specific parts of the body), moxa (burning a sacred leaf on different parts of the anatomy), and the ancient art of massage.

c. These traditional practices have not prevented the people from accepting modern medical treatment and practices, primarily because they have witnessed the striking results of using antibiotics and modern surgical techniques. On the other hand, the long-held belief that almost anyone can cause the illness or death of another, if he possesses anything that belongs to the victim, often makes it difficult to obtain blood samples. Many believe that Western medicine and drugs are dibilitating to Vietnamese; others are so impressed by antibiotics that they take them on a continuous basis and develop toxic conditions or die. The same practice has developed resistant bacteria in Vietnam.

56. Nutrition. The Vietnamese are not ignorant of the need for a proper diet, but they are not knowledgeable of proper nutritional practices.

They take pains to eat enough of what they consider to be the proper foods and have many home remedies and cures. These practices include eating a bitter melon (khu qua) to keep the stomach and intestines healthy, eating red pepper to prevent worms, chewing areco or betel nuts to keep the heart healthy, and drinking certain alcoholic beverages occasionally for all-round good health. Rice is the staple of the diet of any class. Dietary imbalances cause nutritional deficiency diseases, in spite of the fact that the average daily per capita calorie intake is 2,490. Beriberi is common because they eat polished rice almost exclusively. Kwashiorkor, a fatty degeneration of the liver, is prevalent because their diet is overbalanced toward carbohydrates. Keratomalacia (ulceration of the cornea); stomatitis, and oral inflammations are caused by lack of enough vitamins A and B.

57. Sanitation. The generally polluted water supply causes many cases of enteric and waterborne diseases. It would be necessary to build an almost completely new water supply system countrywide to prevent water contamination; most pipelines are either leaky or porous. Most of the water also has entirely too much iron, and operating filtration systems are minimal.

a. The sewage and water disposal systems are rudimentary. Sewage lines and flush toilets are nonexistent except in a few cities. Only a few wealthy families have septic tanks in rural areas, and most sewage is discharged into canals and rivers without treatment. High tides flood many existing sewage collection networks, covering large areas with raw sewage, and open ditches serve as communal toilets in the poor sections of the towns. Pit latrines have been built for many villages; but the inhabitants can't see much reason to change their old practices, because they don't understand elementary principles of hygiene.

b. Garbage is put out in open containers and removed in open vehicles, in the few places where garbage removal is in operation, attracting rats, fleas, and flies. Sanitary practices of slaughterhouses, markets, and restaurants are practically uncontrolled, and the majority of the poor and rural people clean their food equipment with sand and water.

58. Disease. Many diseases are endemic, and various serious diseases periodically become epidemic. Effective widescale use of preventive measures is hampered by the shortage of insecticides and other public health techniques and by the people's superstitions.

a. Malaria, tuberculosis, intestinal diseases, parasitic infections, ameobic and bacillary dysentery, intestinal parasites, and typhoid are endemic. Malaria is a yearlong, countrywide problem, but it is especially prevalent in the Mekong Delta and the central highlands. Its incidence in the delta does not vary, but it peaks elsewhere in January through March. Wholesale spraying, started in 1958 as part of an intensive eradication program, dropped the incidence somewhat. Food poisoning and

infectious hepatitis are common because of the lack of adequate refrigeration. A mild chronic trachoma that causes a partial loss of vision in 30 percent of the cases is very common. Alcoholism is not prevalent but opium addiction is. Another cause of concern is the increase in incidence of venereal disease.

b. Villagers normally are not eager to cooperate in preventive programs, and Viet Cong and North Vietnamese activities make them even less so. When antimalaria operations were started, the Viet Cong not only mounted an intensive campaign in agricultural areas to convince the residents that DDT was poisonous, but also killed or intimidated the technicians working in the program. The VC campaign convinced many Montagnards, and they also killed or captured health workers.

59. Medical services. European and American missionaries first introduced Western medical practices into Indochina before 1800. The French organized a public health service, built medical facilities, and started a school of medicine at the University of Hanoi which trained many Vietnamese doctors in Western practices.

a. The RVN Government created a Ministry of Health in 1956 to coordinate the activities of the various public health administrative agencies. It reported directly to the President and was responsible for preparation and implementation of legislation for Government supervision of pharmacies and laboratories, control of social and communciable diseases, education and training of auxiliary health personnel, and liaison with international health organizations. Development of public health facilities was slowed by the continuing insurgency, but great improvements were made in both physical facilities and number of medical personnel. Advances were made in communicable disease control, environmental maternal and child welfare, nutrition, attrition of chronic and degenerative diseases, medical research, and international cooperation.

b. South Vietnam still has a severe shortage of doctors and trained nurses, nurses' aides, and midwives. New medical and nursing schools have been established, and facilities for both have been expanded since the preconflict period, but the shortage remains acute. About 800 doctors were practicing in 1965-66; 500 or more in the Army, about 150 in Saigon, and only about 150 elsewhere in the country. The ratio of physicians to people was about 1:100,000 except in Saigon. About 4,600 Chinese and Vietnamese were treating the majority of the people with ong long--traditional Chinese medicine. The "Chinese" doctors maintained harmony with Western-trained doctors, because the latter were unable to treat everyone and also understood the cultural traditions and actual therapeutic value of the ong long practices.

c. Most provincial hospitals are nearly 100 years old and in bad repair; many still do not have adequate water and electricity. District dispensaries and village and hamlet health stations have been built since

independence, but laboratory facilities are woefully inadequate. There were only 1.5 hospital beds for each 1,000 persons in 1965.

60. Living standards. The Montagnards had the lowest standard of living, because the land they cultivate is not as fertile as in the deltas and coastal lowlands. They supplemented their meager rice and corn crops with hunting and fishing and by bartering ironwork, pottery, and forest products for basic necessities. Rural incomes are very low by US standards, but there is little variation between the well-to-do and the poorest, because the families raise most of their own food and build their own houses out of inexpensive or free local materials. The Viet Cong added to the problems of middle income families by cutting transportation routes and confiscating supply shipments. They exacted high tribute from rural families and caused many to abandon their homes and farms to get away from the VC terrorism. Black-marketing and inflation rose together as a result of military operations and Viet Cong/Viet Minh terrorist activities.

a. Wealthy Saigon families reside in sturdy stone or brick houses with modern water, electric, and sanitary facilities. Middle class families usually live in multiunit buildings which combine shops and living quarters. Many of them have no electricity, water, or heating facilities; they use gasoline or kerosene lamps, heat with charcoal braziers, and get their water from the river, canal, or a street hydrant. On the other hand, some have kitchens, bathrooms, refrigerators, and even sewing machines, and many have modern upholstered furniture instead of the traditional wooden-seated chairs. Low-income families live in straw or board houses with tin roofs or in houses constructed of mansonry, thatch, or wood. These families have no cooking or sanitary facilities; buy their meals from vendors, get their water from a communal public faucet, and use the public toilets that are built over canals or open ditches. The influx of refugees from North Vietnam since 1945, and even more since 1954, has overcrowded the cities and acutely overtaxed public utilities.

b. Villagers live in dirt-floored thatch houses with plant beds and maybe several chairs and tables, but the houses always contain an altar for communication with their ancestors. Well-to-do villagers usually have masonry or frame houses and may have beautifully carved or inlaid furniture which has been acquired by the family through generations of hard work.

c. Each person tries to have new clothing for Tet, regardless of the relative cost of clothing, but may get no other new clothes during the year. The poor peasant farmers normally wear loose black cotton trousers and a cotton shirt with sleeves but no collar. Well-to-do Vietnamese wear the same sort of clothing, made of silk or satin, at home and Western slacks and shirts or suits in public. Upper income men wear Western business shirts to work, and middle income men wear shorts or slacks and shirts. Poor farmers go barefoot most of the time and save their wooden clogs for ceremonial occasions. Middle class women often

wear high-heeled sandals with the traditional loose trousers topped with a fitted tunic.

61. Welfare assistance. Welfare activities of the French Colonial administration were limited primarily to education and medical services. Families and villages normally take care of their own. After independence, the Government increased welfare activities and attempted, with US funds and advice, to improve living conditions countrywide but especially in rural areas. Economic welfare activities (land reform, farm loans, and similar aspects) were discussed in chapter 3. USOM helped start programs to build roads between rural settlements, to provide pure water for rural areas, to establish dispensaries and health stations, to improve crops and livestock, and to build irrigation systems where needed. US and South Vietnamese military personnel and units assisted in these programs and also built schools and hospitals. Vietnamese Boy Scouts and other youth organizations have assisted in welfare programs, as have religious groups, private charities, and international welfare organizations. Diem's greatest contribution to personal welfare was his administration's remarkable successful resettlement program.

62. Conclusions. Modernization has had a profound effect on Vietnamese of all levels. It has increased geographical, occupational, and social mobility; it has tended to undermine and disintegrate the tight kinship groupings of the past with their simple societies; it has shifted the pattern of power in the nuclear family and changed marital patterns. Exposure to the world beyond their own village walls and rice paddies has caused many farmers to desire and seek urban status. It also has enabled many tenant farmers to become owners of land they once farmed for an absentee landlord. Many people who once were owners of small landholdings which were dissipated by inheritance or usury have become members of a middle and low-middle working class and have no desire to return to farming, unless they can take electricity, running water, and other urban advantages with them.

a. The Vietnamese farmer's natural instinct to survive and his original sympathy with and belief in the high ideals of the Viet Minh and Viet Cong combined to lead him to support the insurgency movement when the risks were small or when security was nonexistent. Prior to and for some time after the beginning of the preconflict period, the farmer reasoned that the Viet Minh and Viet Cong were Vietnamese who were fighting to eradicate the basic problems of his existence. Since independence, the Government has been successful in turning many areas against the insurgency by maintaining security for hamlets and villages and improving the lot of the peasants.

b. Communists wage their highest intensity ideological warfare at the lowest income classes and especially the agricultural society, for a parochial cultural and ethnic entity is formed at hamlet level. The success or failure of any ideological campaign at that level depends on

the acceptance of the new ideas by the individual. Where assistance did not work, the Communists used terrorism. "Execution" of villagers who cooperated with the Government were everyday occurrences, but the Communists sometimes exercised their imaginations. They rounded up all the residents of one village and forced them to watch as they disembowleded the wife of the village chief, cut off his children's arms and legs, and then emasculated the chief. The Government relocated many villages which it could not protect, but the decay in the corporate entity of the village that can set in when outside influences penetrate and upset its world apparently has not been prevalent in South Vietnam. Most of the villagers who have been relocated consider their new locations to be only temporary and expect to return to their original villages at the end of the conflict.

c. Social conditions have improved, on the whole, since independence was granted because of enlightened Government policies and programs and outside aid in carrying them out. South Vietnam has not yet succeeded in overcoming the problems created by any modernization program in a developing nation. Some of these are problems of communication between a small modernizing elite and a large mass of tradition-bound people. Communication problems are aggravated in such cases by the normally underdeveloped state of modern mass media, a normally high illiteracy rate that precludes wide use of printed material, scanty scientific knowledge of both the communication system and communication needs, and diverse languages or dialects. The Government is, however, making progress.

CHAPTER 5

MILITARY FACTORS

Section I. Military History.

63. Chinese domination. Viet Nam, the kingdom of the south, was in existence more than 2,500 years ago. Its people consider themselves compliant and peaceful, but their heroes are the men and women who fought invaders from the north valiantly, whether they won or lost, and those who enabled the Vietnamese to extend their country all the way to the Gulf of Siam. They moved south from their original location south of the Yangtze River about 333 B.C., when that kingdom fell to northern Chinese forces. They overcame a mixed Indonesian population to take over the Red River Delta, then slowly fought their way south until the Kingdom of Nam Viet extended to a mountain pass some 15 miles south of the 17th parallel by about 200 B.C.

a. This area was conquered and became the southernmost province of China, Giao Chi, from 111 B.C. to A.D. 938. The conquered kingdom had been administered through a feudal system. Provincial lords, many with royal kinship, vowed their allegiance to the king, and the hereditary chiefs of local villages or groups of villages were vassals of the lords. The Chinese originally did not disturb the system, so long as the feudal lords and village chiefs recognized the authority of Chinese officials and paid taxes. As Chinese officials later extended their control, the Vietnamese aristocracy rebelled against inroads on its traditional prerogatives. The famous heroines Trung Trac and Trung Nhi led the rebellion and ruled jointly from A.D. 39 to A.D. 43, when they comitted suicide on the defeat of their forces. Many other unsuccessful revolts occurred before the Vietnamese were able to throw off the yoke of Chinese rule.

b. The stringent control imposed by the Chinese after the defeat of the Trungs, coupled with the exile of all Vietnamese leaders who had not been killed, led to a breakdown of the feudal system, subordination of the Vietnamese aristocracy, and aggressive introduction of Chinese cultural teachings. The Chinese also established communes of peasant families throughout the country as part of their campaign to destroy the feudal system. Each commune of not more than 50 families elected its own commune council from among influential villagers. The councils became the basic administrative unit in the country and managed commune affairs with only nominal Chinese supervision so long as they collected the taxes, provided conscripts for the Army, and implemented Chinese decrees. The communes obtained their operating funds from their communal lands and were the forerunners of the village entities which became the deciding factor in successful repulsion of later Chinese invaders. Subsequent Vietnamese

dynasties carefully preserved village autonomy in gratitude for the assistance the commune peasants gave in preventing the return of the Chinese.

c. The T'ang dynasty, the last of the Chinese reign, made Giao Chi a protectorate-general and renamed it Annam. In A.D. 938, General Ngo Quyen led the Vietnamese in expelling the Chinese during the disorders that followed the fall of the T'ang dynasty, and ruled for 8 years. The Vietnamese won their independence while repelling Chinese attempts to retake the Red River Delta. Dinh Bo Linh defeated the many local leaders in the Red River area and established the Great Viet State in 968. Fearful of the overwhelming forces that the new Sung dynasty could send south, Dinh arranged to become a vassal king and to send tribute to the Sungs every 3 years in exchange for a cessation of Chinese efforts to impose its authority on the Great Viet State. Dinh's arrangements with the Chinese left him relatively free to fight with the Kingdom of Champa, the Indian-oriented country that encompassed most of the peninsula south of what is today Da Nang.

d. The Ly dynasty took the throne away from Dinh in 1009 and established an efficient Government with strong administrative and military organizations, a form of government that lasted until the French arrived. The Emperor, the son of heaven, was the religious as well as the civil leader of the country. He established the mandarinate and set up the first examinations in Chinese classical literature as prerequisites for becoming a mandarin. The third Ly Emperor, Thanh Tong, named the country Dai Viet (Greater Viet) in 1069 after defeating Champa in war. A Chinese aggression in 1076 was repulsed, as were invasions from the Kingdom of Cambodia, and the program of expansion to the south that culminated in acquiring the southern tip of the peninsula from Cambodia in 1780 was started.

e. The Tran dynasty seized the throne in 1225. In addition to carrying on continued conflict with Champa, the Trans successfully withstood three invasions by Kublai Khan's Mongols, then established peace with the Khan through payment of tribute. The Tranh established the first military academy in Vietnam. Confucianism also became ascendant over Buddhism during the Tran dynasty. The devastation caused by almost continuous war created social and economic crises that were aggravated by an incompetent and corrupt bureaucracy and appropriation of peasant land by the nobility. When the regent Ho Qui Ly usurped the throne, the Ming dynasty moved in, supposedly to restore the Tran dynasty, made Dai Viet a Chinese Province again in 1406, tried to make the people accept Chinese beliefs and culture, and exploited the country unmercifully.

f. A powerful nationalist movement led by Le Loi, a landowning aristocrat, arose by 1426 and expelled the Chinese (using guerrilla tactics) about a year later. Le's ascendancy to the throne started a dynasty that managed to keep peace with the Chinese while conquering

Champa, acquiring all the land as far south as the 13th parallel, and making the rest of Champa a vassal state to Dai Viet by 1471. Absorption of Champa territory continued through a period of internal disorder in Dai Viet. Starting in 1527, the throne first was taken by General Mac Dang Dung. The Nguyen family soon established a Le descendant as head of a government-in-exile south of Hanoi. The Trinh family ousted Mac, established a Le as puppet ruler of the north, and consolidated its power south of today's demarcation line. They battled the Nguyens for 50 years for control of the country--both families supposedly as Le supporters. During a 100-year truce between the two families (1673-1773), the Nguyens carried forward vigorous aggression against Cambodia and succeeded in annexing the rest of the peninsula (Mekong Delta).

g. Three brothers of a Nguyen family from Central Dai Viet (Tay Son) led an uprising, backed by popular support, against the ruling Nguyens (no relation) late in the 18th century. The eldest drove the Nguyen nobles out of the south. The youngest attacked the Trinh in the north and defeated them by 1786, then set aside the Le dynasty, took over the south from his brother, and became Emperor of a reunited Dai Viet in 1788. He attempted to instill a nationalism in his people that would be non-Chinese and was the monarch who initiated the use of a common "script" of Chinese characters or parts of characters to express Vietnamese sounds (chu nom). Known as the Emperor Quang Trung, he set about developing one of the best armies Vietnam ever had. Military service became mandatory for one out of every three men between 18 and 55, and his recruits were trained thoroughly in imperial schools.

h. Missionaries and traders from Portugal, Spain, Holland, England, and France started invading the Orient early in the 16th century; the Portuguese arrived in Vietnam about 1535 but were unable to dictate terms to the strong Trinh and Nguyen forces that controlled the country at that time. When the Nguyen and Trinh families lost interest in purchasing weapons and munitions after their 1673 truce, trade fell off rapidly until it became almost nonexistent by 1700.

i. While the Tay Son Nguyens were taking over the country, the Catholic Bishop of Adran (Pigneau de Behaine) helped the last of the early Nguyen lords, Nguyen Anh, escape the Tay Son. The Bishop schemed to put Anh on the throne as the first Christian king in exchange for trade concessions for France but received no assistance from Paris. As a result, he organized a private force of Frenchmen to help. Anh's forces defeated the last Tay Son in 1802, and he ascended the throne as Gia Long and named his again-united country Viet Nam. He established his court at Hue where it remained until Bao Dai's abdication, and obtained recognition from the Ch'ing dynasty in China through payment of tribute every other year. Gai Long was not a Christian, but he did refrain from persecuting Christians out of gratitude to Pigneau. His successors did not follow his example. Gai Long built a military force of 110,000 men,

including 15,000 artillerymen, elephant units of 8,000 men and 200 animals, and 200 warships with 16-22 guns each. The Army soon began to deteriorate in spite of a relatively good organization and was only mediocre by 1861. The duty of training the soldiers was performed only perfunctorily by officers who looked down on the peasants. Weapons were hopelessly outdated. Most of the forces still used spears and cutlasses; only one man in 10 had a rifle. Nevertheless, Gia Long's successors victoriously fought both Cambodia and Siam for control of the former. Cambodia was under direct Vietnamese rule by 1834, but the Siamese forced the Vietnamese to accept joint control by 1845. This joint control continued until the French stepped in in 1863 and proclaimed the whole of Indochina to be a French Protectorate.

j. The French had economic and military advantages as reasons for aggression in Indochina, in addition to those of national prestige and protection for its missionaries. They took Da Nang in 1858 and Saigon in 1861 and forced the Emperor in 1862 to cede Saigon and its environs to France, to pay an indemnity, and to promise not to cede any other Vietnamese territory to anyone else without French permission. France annexed the rest of the Mekong Delta in 1867, then turned its attention to the Red River Delta. The terms of an 1875 treaty that permitted French traders to use the Red River were largely negated by the activities of Chinese pirates. By 1883, France had conquered northern Vietnam and established the Protectorate of Tonkin. The next year it established the Protectorate of Annam, with the Emperor left at Hue in nominal control of internal affairs. The Chinese did not recognize treaties made with the Vietnamese without China's approval, so sent a force in to win back the Red River area. The French expelled the Chinese force and won formal Chinese recognition of its Protectorates by 1885. By 1887, the French had formed the Indochinese Union of Tonkin, Annam, Cochin China, and Cambodia to which it added Laos in 1893.

64. French colonial period. The Vietnamese revolted periodically and unsuccessfully against the French until the early part of the 20th century. The Vietnamese Nationalists had to be clandestine in their opposition to the French; they were unable to unite for more strength; and they did not develop a tradition of democratic practices. The French used Vietnamese as auxiliaries in the French Union Forces, but kept them in subordinate positions to prevent development of potential resistance leaders.

a. The Vietnamese remained in their subordinate positions during World War II because the French maintained nominal administrative control, even though the Japanese were given troop transit rights and control of the military installations by the Vichy Government. Control was snatched from the French in March 1945 when the Japanese suddenly interned all French civil and military forces to prevent them from assisting in a supposedly imminent Allied invasion. The French did not regain control

until September, and then only in the southern half of the country and only with British and even some Japanese assistance.

b. Vietnamese were in the majority in the French forces in Indochina during most of World War II, and about 25,000 served in France. The Vietnamese fought well and loyally during the War in spite of the inequities and discrimination that existed. This fact should not be surprising, since they were used to the French and were no more eager to be conquered by the Japanese than any other people of the Pacific.

65. Indochina War. When the Indochina War started in 1946, the French still used the Vietnamese only as auxiliaries in subordinate positions. As the War progressed and circumstances became more demanding, the French were forced to change their policy and form independent Vietnamese units. They still had French officers and noncommissioned officers, for there were almost no Vietnamese trained to hold such positions. Most of these units were attached to Foreign Legion units, in the belief that only the Legionnaries would be able to handle them and use their capabilities most effectively.

a. The French planned to form four divisions in the new Vietnamese National Army, but only one had been formed by 1950; the other three were skeletal although about 40 battalions were in various stages of training. Many problems faced the planners. They needed Vietnamese officers badly, but the only place a potential officer could get the necessary training was in France. To rectify this situation, the French started a Vietnamese Military Academy at Da Lat to graduate 150 officers a year. The academy did not produce the expected number of graduates, and those it did produce often were not effective officers. Few of the educated and middle class applied for admission, for these groups were disenchanted with the French. They also held the peasants in contempt, which made it difficult for them to lead, inspire, and command the very people they were being trained to command. Few peasants had enough education to be able to complete the academy courses successfully. The command effectiveness of the officers who felt so contemptuous of the men they were supposed to lead contrasted unfavorably with that of the local militia officers who had brought their men with them into the Army but could not obtain commissions because of lack of formal education. In addition, the French military command was reluctant to relinquish its authority to the Vietnamese, for many French officers were convinced that Bao Dai's ambitions ran counter to the best interests of France.

b. The Americans started providing military equipment to the French forces and used this aid as a lever to try to force the French to increase the size of the Vietnamese Army. They were convinced that development of an Army of adequate size would permit Bao Dai to defend his own country, control the spread of communism, and hasten the withdrawal of the French. The French acquiesced to their demands that the Army be increased to six

divisions, for fear of losing the badly needed American supplies and equipment. It was agreed that the Army would contain 54 infantry and two paratroop battalions and four artillery groups. The Army was to be brought up to strength by conscription and by incorporating local militia units. Many of the conscripts deserted or refused to serve outside their home regions, and most Vietnamese objected to conscription on general principles.

c. The training of the new units was below standard; training centers were decentralized and did not have full cadres. The officer shortage, substandard training, and equipment shortages prevented General Salan from mustering additional force for offensive operations by the end of 1952. The conditions worsened in the next 6 months as morale in the Vietnamese units plummeted when the soldiers' pay was reduced by devaluation of the piastre.

d. When General Henri Navarre was appointed Commander in Chief in 1953, more than 82,000 troops were immobilized behind barbed wire in more than 900 forts. Enough equipment for several divisions was required to defend these static positions. In addition, the Vietnamese National Army (VNA) was far below its authorized strength of 150,000--it still was below 100,000 at the end of 1953, and very few of the existing units were under the control of Bao Dai. Many battalions were attached to French mobile groups under French command, and many were split and mixed into other mobile group commands. This situation did not increase harmony between the French and Vietnamese, because many mobile battalions and group commanders considered their native troops incapable of participating in large-scale actions as effective soldiers. On the other hand, the mixed units seemed to have greater combat effectiveness than all-Vietnamese units, which lacked the discipline of the French, or all-European units, which lacked the knowledge of the terrain and language of the Vietnamese.

e. Navarre immediately made plans to expand the VNA and to improve its training and equipment. He opened two new training centers: one near Yen (about 15 miles across Along Bay from Haiphong) and the other near Nha Trang. His plans for accelerated training called for deployment of 20 combat-ready Vietnamese light battalions by the end of 1953 and 35 more by the end of 1954 to take over defensive duties in pacified areas. Navarre did turn over some defensive positions to Vietnamese units, but they were not sufficiently motivated nor combat-ready for such duty by the end of 1953. The Vietnamese Army had improved a great deal but not enough for it to be rated as a first class military organization. The relationship between the Vietnamese and French units also had improved greatly, although some friction remained because of the continuing inequities and discrimination between the forces.

f. Development of 52 commando battalions in the Vietnamese Army, trained and equipped to fight in the paddies and jungles under the same

conditions as the Viet Minh, also was planned. The first battalions sent in the field were very well trained and motivated but were under strength, lightly equipped, and inexperienced in combat. They were sent to an area in the Red River Delta where two regiments of tough combat-experienced regulars of the Viet Minh main force had established control. The Viet Minh recognized the weight that a sizable number of VNA commando units trained in guerrilla warfare would exert on the balance of power between the two forces and went all out to defeat the first units in the field. The decisive defeat the Viet Minh administered to the VNA commando battalions in the first battle affected the program so adversely that the commando battalions were totally unreliable as an autonomous combat force by the spring of 1954.

g. The failure of Navarre's continued effort to accomplish a significant improvement in the combat effectiveness of the VNA forced him to continue using static defense-strongpoint tactics which were useless against guerrillas. The limited victories his forces were able to achieve were won by his mobile groups. Their equipment, however, kept them relatively roadbound and unable to pursue and defeat the enemy. Combat attrition cut down these units one after another until the last and one of the best, Mobile Group 100, was defeated severely in June 1954. The defeat of Mobile Group 100, added to the earlier fall of Dien Bien Phu (7 May), shook the Vietnamese Army to its foundations. Its combat effectiveness decreased in direct ratio to its plunging morale and mushrooming lack of faith in its own capabilities. The continued disintegration of the VNA and the political situation in Paris forced the French to seek a negotiated peace through the Geneva Conference of 1954.

Section II. Republic of Vietnam Military Establishment.

66. Military forces. The Armed Forces have a two-edged mission to defend the national sovereignty while eliminating Communist insurgency within its borders. The Vietnamese Army had grown to more than 200,000 men by the end of the Indochinese War in 1954, but it had little or nothing in the way of combat support troops or equipment and very few officers above the rank of major. In addition, its own morale and its prestige among the Vietnamese people had been so damaged during the losing war that it was almost nonexistent by the time the Republic of Vietnam was established in 1955. In addition to the 200,000 men in the Army, the Government had about 50,000 in local (village) militia, and the French still had some 30,000 troops in Vietnam at the end of the war. An Air Force and a Navy and Marine Corps had been organized in 1952 but had received little training or equipment assistance and consisted of less than 3,000 men in each service.

a. The United States had started providing equipment to the French/Vietnamese forces in 1951. US representatives were recommending as early

as 1953 that a joint French/Vietnamese training command, in which the United States would provide expertise on US equipment, be established. The French refused to permit the United States to provide anything but advice and insisted on providing the training and assistance themselves, without direct US contact with the VNA. Most technical and staff services were provided by the French until 1954, precluding most Vietnamese officers from acquiring experience in these fields.

b. When US military advisers succeeded the French, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) was a loosely organized establishment of battalion-size units with little or no command structure, inadequate and poorly trained staffs, and no centralized tactical headquarters. Most of these small units were deployed in static positions as security forces or in areas ostensibly free of Viet Minh domination as pacification forces. The military schools and training centers were not operating at capacity, and their training methods and equipment lacked uniformity.

c. US advisers arrived with a defense concept colored by their recent experience in Korea. Their advice influenced the Government to view its situation as requiring concentration of its military forces in a linear defense against attacks across the demarcation line for 2-3 weeks until SEATO forces could arrive to repel such attacks. Vietnam is not a signatory to SEATO, but the pact extended protection to the four former Indochinese states of the French Union by protocol. The idea was to field 10 artillery- and armor-heavy divisions of approximately 10,000 men each. At the same time that this concept was being developed, other US strategists were advocating development of a force that would be able to police the countryside against Communist guerrillas and their infiltration efforts. These contradictory positions added to the confusion and did nothing to improve Vietnam's security.

d. Army strength was cut to the 150,000-man force the United States had indicated it would support. The US Military Assistance Advisory Group provided training for this smaller force, assisted in reorganizing the battalions into division-size units, helped develop logistic and combat support services, and sent promising young officers to the United States for advanced training. The United States paid most of the costs of reorganizing and maintaining the ARVN, including personnel pay.

e. The skilled ARVN officers who had been recruited, educated, and trained by and had served with the highly professional French military organization found it hard to accept their positions as leaders of an inferior military organization. Most of them still had ties to the French that were hard to eliminate and that, regardless of their strength of character, made the transition difficult. The antithetical nature of these two factors tended to hamper the development of Vietnam's Army. After Diem came to power, the highly nationalistic flavor of his administration appealed to the French-trained Vietnamese officers and drew them

away from their French orientation. They became absolutely loyal to the Government and accepted the US MAAG as its new principal adviser, assuming hopefully that the MAAG personnel would be proadministration.

f. Three distinct military forces were operating in Vietnam in 1955 in addition to the Army: the Cao Dai had an army of 15,000-20,000; the Hoa Hao, 10,000-15,000; and the Binh Xuyen, 2,000-5,000. The French had assured the continued autonomy of these forces while they controlled the country through political manipulations, but the new Government had to get rid of them to extend its authority over the rest of the country. These private armies had challenged the Government, and the Binh Xuyen threatened to take over all governmental functions in the summer of 1954. The Binh Xuyen also controlled much of the country's police and particularly in Saigon, where public order was deteriorating rapidly. French and US representatives worked with Government representatives in an attempt to integrate the sect forces with the Army and were relatively successful. Many Cao Dai and Hoa Hao officers and men joined the VNA. The Hoa Hao are very clannish and would not serve with troops of their faiths, so were used primarily in their home areas. The Cao Dai are more nationalistic than most other ethnic groups and will serve under non-Cao Dai officers. A few sect leaders and the Binh Xuyen were uncooperative and were defeated by force; some sect leaders went into exile. The problems created by the animosities of the sects to the Government made the MAAG job harder until Diem succeeded in restoring confidence in his authority.

g. As US direct assistance increased, the Government requested France to withdraw its forces early in 1956. The French left in April, taking with them all usable modern equipment and leaving behind only outdated weapons. The magnitude of the task of reorganizing the ARVN came into focus for the first time, and many French-trained ARVN officers doubted the efficacy of developing a force along US force structures and the capability of the US advisers to accomplish the job.

h. The MAAG chief decided in 1955, on the basis of resources available, that the ARVN should have only seven divisions. The units would be filled from the existing light battalions, and personnel not required in the seven divisions would be demobilized. The MAAG developed the first conventional Vietnamese military organization in 1955 with a line and staff and a tactical command and control headquarters capable of functioning in the Western manner. The young Army's advance was slowed somewhat when Diem appointed a number of young officers to replace the civil chiefs in provinces southwest of Saigon where important political and military power was concentrated. Very few Vietnamese officers had had other than purely military responsibilities in the past, and the few who had were selected carefully by the French to meet minimum requirements for senior officers in the VNA. Officers so selected had been trained and developed by the French and usually were Francophiles.

i. Once the seven-division Army had been organized, development of a military school system was initiated to provide the expertise that was sorely lacking. The military academy had been in operation since 1950 and the officer candidate school for Reserve officers almost as long. The paucity of qualified staff officers instigated establishment of a Command and General Staff Course in Saigon in 1956 as the highest ranking school in the system. The Course was to round out the advanced training of field grade officers with instruction in staff work, combined operations, and general academic subjects. Training in staff procedures also was provided for selected company grade officers. Selected senior officers were given a short refresher course in policy and organizational concepts and training on the new US weapons the Army was receiving. An Armed Forces Language School was started in 1956 to teach English to the Vietnamese, so they would be better able to use US training literature and so the MAAG personnel would be better able to communicate with them in direct training. A medical training center also was established the same year.

j. Soon after the divisions were formed, plans were developed to create additional command and staff levels. The first corps headquarters was activated in 1957, another in 1958, and a third in 1959. The Army had developed by then from a rudimentary organization of light battalions of varying size and function within the French Union Forces to an independent three-corps field force composed of seven divisions and 22 regiments and an appropriate mix of combat and service support units. The Vietnamese Government paid about 10 percent of the cost of maintaining its defense establishment, and the United States used about 80 percent of its $250 million a year aid funds to support and maintain the Army.

k. The strength of the Army was decreased to 135,000-140,000 to provide 10,000-15,000 positions for the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps and still maintain the total Armed Forces at the 150,000 level the United States had agreed to support. The total strength of the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps has remained at about 11-14 percent of that of the Army as the Army has increased in size. Estimated 1966 strengths were 36,000 in the Air Force, Navy, and Marines and 264,000 in the Army. The Navy's general mission is to maintain security of the sea approaches and protect the Mekong Delta's inland waterways. It has a secondary mission to provide water transport for the Army. The Navy also runs counterinsurgency patrols in the coastal and inland waters and provides required assistance to other Government agencies operating in these waters against illegal activities such as smuggling. The Marine Corps is charged with conducting land operations with the Army or separately. The Air Force performs the same kind of tactical and support operations for the Army that the US Air Force performs for other US services. The Vietnamese Air Force has no strategic capability or mission.

67. Paramilitary forces. The Government military establishment includes the Popular Force (formerly the Self Defense Corps), the Regional Force (formerly the Civil Guard), and the Civilian Irregular Defense Group. The last was not formed until 2 years after the end of the preconflict period. The strength of the three paramilitary forces in the late 1960's was about equal to that of the Armed Forces, and they were provided equipment by the United States.

a. The Government created the Self Defense Corps in 1955 to provide local security for villages and other rural areas, but it was not adequate to defend the countryside. It started its existence with a high esprit de corps, but the inability of either the Government or US advisers to give the Corps adequate monetary or training assistance soon created a morale problem: efficiency dropped, units ceased to patrol and lapsed into an apparent state of lethargy in their villages. The Government was unable in the early years to provide the Corps with outright money or training assistance, so it assigned regular Army officers to command it and attached it to the Department of National Defense to try to provide additional expertise and motivation. Later, the Corps became the Popular Force and was organized into squads, platoons, and companies that were supervised operationally by sector and subsector headquarters. Its members are not uniformed and are very lightly armed. The squad is the basic unit for operations whether offensive or counterattack. Its units often are used in joint operations with the regular Armed Forces. The Popular Force has received extensive aid from USMACV.

b. The Civil Guard was organized in 1956 as a paramilitary force with a mobile capability to protect critical facilities and lines of communication within the province in which it was recruited. Its units functioned as anti-infiltration and counterguerrilla forces, and most of its officers were ARVN personnel. It was established under the executive branch of the Government to separate it from the Department of National Defense and create a strong counter to the Army. The Guard closely paralleled the "conventional police force with a strike capability" that was envisioned in 1955 as the best anti-Communist force. US aid personnel considered the function of the Guard to be nonmilitary and refused to assist it.

c. The Government could not use US military aid funds to support the Self Defense Corps and the Civil Guard, primarily because they were assigned to the Interior Department rather than the Defense Department. Instead, it derived the money to pay them from 50 percent of the revenue it received from a special arrangement that permitted South Vietnam to tax commodity imports from the United States. Both organizations had deteriorated into untrained, incompetent groups living on the proverbial shoestring.

d. The Civil Guard was transferred to the Defense Department in 1960 and reorganized into squads, platoons, companies, and battalions administered by a national and regional headquarters. It was renamed the Regional Force in 1964. Its lightly armed uniformed units normally operate under the Province Chief, using the company as the basic offensive unit. Although its primary mission is to provide internal security at province level, it also collects information about counterinsurgency, engages in civil action projects, and builds confidence in the capabilities of the Government among the rural dwellers with whom it comes in contact. Both the Popular and the Regional Force are under the command of the Armed Forces commander when they engage in joint operations with Armed Forces units.

e. The Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) was organized after the preconflict period as a result of the fear and antagonism that arose among Montagnards over resettlement of Vietnamese in the highlands and attempts to settle the seminomadic highlanders near the new Vietnamese communities. The Vietnamese wanted the Montagnards to be protected from guerrilla activity and to be brought in close contact with Vietnamese influences as part of the program to integrate them into Vietnamese economic, social, and political life. Since the Montagnards did not wish to settle in one location and considered the inflow of Vietnamese to be a threat to their inhabitance of their ancestral lands, they became highly vulnerable to Communist propaganda. The CIDG was formed to counteract the effect of the propaganda, to help win the loyalty of the highlanders to the Government, and to train them in resistance tactics for combat against the Viet Cong. The CIDG later was transferred to the Armed Forces, and its primary mission was changed to border patrol and special operations.

68. Police forces. Before World War II, large cities had municipal police departments, the National Security Police were charged with maintaining public order outside the cities, and the Gendarmerie operated elsewhere. The National Security Police was patterned after the Surete Nationale.

a. The Gendarmerie operated countrywide as an arm of the defense organization. It was equipped by the Army and was well-trained to accomplish both civil and military investigations. It was deactivated at the end of 1964, and its special activities were taken over by other Government agencies. Its deactivation strength was about 1,200; approximately 75 percent of its members joined the National Police and the rest joined the Military Police.

b. The Japanese did not disturb the French police system during their occupation of southern Vietnam. Bao Dai established his Nationalist Government in 1945 without changing the police system or organization, and again the Japanese did not interfere. Ho Chi Minh's Communist

Viet Minh began to take over as the Japanese position weakened, and Bao Dai's abdication in favor of a Viet Minh Government put the Communist forces in power. British military forces took over police functions from the time they arrived to accept the Japanese surrender until the French forces returned and reinstated their own police systems. When Bao Dai returned from exile to head the Government of the independent nation of Vietnam in 1949, the Vietnamese Government assumed some nominal police powers, but the Communists had established actual control in the north 3 years earlier and continued to be the strongest force in that area. The French police organizations continued in part, but Viet Minh activities and the lack of trained Vietnamese police administrators diminished the effectiveness of law enforcement in the south to a point where crime and subversion were able to run rampant.

c. The growth of the Viet Cong expanded Viet Minh activities, and the huge influx of refugees since Vietnam was partitioned had created sharp increases in vice and other criminal activities and posed a hazard to public safety. The Binh Xuyen, an organization of racketeers and gangsters, controlled the Municipal and Security Police in Saigon. Bao Dai had handed over this authority and granted the Binh Xuyen a monopoly on prostitution, gambling, and the opium traffic in metropolitan areas and permitted the organization to collect fees for various kinds of permits and to control imports and sales of some products. Two Buddhist sects also controlled large areas of the country. The Cao Dai controlled the area north and northwest of Saigon, and the Hoa Hao controlled the area southwest of Saigon.

d. When Ngo Dinh Diem became Prime Minister in 1954, the state of public order had deteriorated almost to the point of disappearance. The Binh Xuyen was threatening to take control of all Government functions; Saigon was a hotbed of agents of contending factions that were attempting to prevent the Government from reinstating effective law enforcement; and the presence of European, Indian, and African members of the French Expeditionary Force increased tensions. Diem managed to get many members of the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao private armies to join the VNA (66f above), to conquer or send into exile those who did not join forces with the Government, and to crush the Binh Xuyen's armed force by April 1956. These actions and the later trial and execution of the Hoa Hao leader raised the confidence of the people in the effectiveness of the Government's law enforcement agencies.

e. The many law enforcement agencies in South Vietnam were overcontrolled at times and never had clearly defined functions and responsibilities until Diem integrated all of them into one national police agency in 1962. The National Security Police, the Municipal Police, and the paramilitary Civil Guard under the Minister of the Interior all performed ordinary police functions. The National Security and Municipal Police reported to the Director General of Police and Security Services in the

Interior Ministry. Each of the country's three regions had a Directorate of Police and Security Services, and each province had a Police Chief and a security service. Larger cities still had their own municipal police. The Government used the Gendarmerie in security functions, rather than as police, until they were deactivated.

f. The efficiency of the police system suffered during this period from political interference in internal matters. Diem exerted far more control and authority over the police than over any other Government agency. He was involved in most major decisions that affected internal security and personally selected key police officials on the basis of their personal loyalty to him, which gave him a personal chain of command. Diem's brothers Nhu and Can had tight control over other groups that helped maintain loyalty to the Government. The Revolutionary Personalist Labor Party (Can Lao Nhan Vi Cach Mang Dang) was an elite semisecret group organized by intellectuals and labor leaders after Diem became Prime Minister. Popularly called the Can Lao, it was reported to have 20,000 members, all recruited selectively from among holders of key positions in the civil service and the military forces. The Can Lao not only was a political intelligence network that often interfered with and attempted to direct police activities; it also was the medium through which Diem and Nhu instructed its members in their doctrine of personalism (an all-enveloping doctrine by which Diem hoped to find a happy middle ground between communism and capitalism). The Social and Political Research Service (So Nghien Cuu Xa Hoi Chinh Tri) probably was the most powerful of several secret police and intelligence agencies. Its chief who reported directly to Diem, was a close companion of Nhu. The Service maintained close surveillance over everyone of any political importance, from politicians and Government officials through military officers, businessmen, professionals, and intellectuals to political, student, and even social groups.

g. Most of the vehicles, communications system, and weapons left by the French for the police were outdated. Most policemen had to use their own bicycles to have any means of transport other than walking. The few jeeps the United States bequeathed to them in 1956 were in poor repair and lacked spare parts. Communications from precinct and station level in urban areas were conducted by telephone, often shared with other Government agencies. Province police had no radio communications, and many had no telephones. Lack of communications capability hampered the police in disseminating information on criminal insurgency, or subversive activities as well as timely instructions and guidance. The inadequate supply of weapons consisted of rifles, shotguns, automatic pistols, and carbines of antiquated and varied foreign manufacture. Ammunition resupply must have been a logistician's nightmare, and provision of spare parts even more impossible. Without mobility, firepower, or communications, police actions against the Viet Cong were ineffective.

Section III. Environmental Factors.

69. Social. Although the Vietnamese have a hereditary love of peace and harmony in all relationships (an outgrowth of their centuries of living by Confucian principles) they are physically tough and make excellent soldiers. Their love of harmony is demonstrated by the prestige they always have given to scholars, the almost universal exchange of good wishes on the lunar new year, and the many provinces, towns, and people named for peace, security, or love. Their military prowess is obvious from the many revolts they instigated against the Chinese and the record of victories and heroic figures.

a. The lives of all Vietnamese, regardless of ethnic origin, were family and village oriented. The head of the linear family or clan was the person whose instructions and advice each family member followed. Something that occurred 700-800 miles away was of no real importance to a peasant or a noble in whose own sphere of influence harmony reigned. Enough to eat, adequate clothing and housing, and the necessities for proper celebration of the cult of the ancestors were all that was needed for the good life. This was true in the time of the Kingdom of Nam Viet and under Chinese administration until it became too authoritarian, since somewhere in the vicinity of 1,000 B.C. Nationalism, as such, just was not of much importance.

b. The Khmers and Chams are the principal non-Vietnamese ethnic groups in the Mekong Delta. They settled in the delta and the central lowlands when the delta was part of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and the central highlands and coastal lowlands almost to today's demarcation line constituted the Kingdom of Champa. These groups were pushed back, overrun, or conquered as the Vietnamese advanced to the south in search of more "lebensraum" and have never been accepted as equals by the Vietnamese. Although some have been assimilated, of course, the majority remain oriented toward Cambodia and have preferred to isolate themselves from the Vietnamese Government and people.

c. The Montagnards were sufficiently parochial in their outlook to resent encroachment on their territory by anyone. They moved successively farther into the highlands with each new incursion of lowlanders. Their seminomadic habits add to the difficulty of integrating them into a static society or of giving them any strong nationalist convictions about territory that is occupied by people who first came on the scene as invaders from foreign places. They always have viewed the lowland people with suspicion and distrust. The highlanders became even further isolated from outside influences when the French created three political subdivisions in Vietnam. When the Viet Minh and later the Viet Cong started trying to alienate the highlanders from the Government and recruit them for Communist purposes, the close military supervision required by the

Government's efforts to secure the areas against Communist terrorism made the highlanders suspect and dislike the Vietnamese even more.

d. Although many forces influence acculturation, few apply more leverage in an underdeveloped country than the military. Military forces have had a secondary but virtually important mission of nationbuilding and have consciously or unconsciously played a key role in the acculturation process. The average man in Vietnam is born into the basically inward-looking society of the village, a society that is kinship-oriented, nonliterate, and engaged in a daily struggle for economic survival. The peasant normally does not have any contact with the outward-looking society of the region beyond the rice paddies of his own village until he turns soldier. Many conscriptees are exposed for the first time to literacy, health, and self-improvement programs when they join the Army. Service in the military draws him into contact with the reality of the rest of his country. When he leaves the service, he is aware of progressive social reforms and, as a more literate citizen with newly acquired skills, is equipped to help overcome traditional ways and propagate new ideas. The military interfaces in some degree with all elements and in a large measure with the political; thus, it is most likely to have the greatest impact on the immediate future of a country. The rate of acculturation is greatly accelerated in the military forces, and the individual retains a high degree of psychological security during the process. Even in Vietnam's transitional society, the individual's economic and social station still is determined primarily by birth and rare opportunity. In any such society, the Armed Forces become a channel for upward mobility, particularly if advancement in the service is based on merit. Advancement in the military and the concomitant advancement in society at large also provide advantageous fallout to the military services. The military image becomes that of a just organization deserving the loyalty of the people and serving as a model for emulation throughout the society.

70. Economic. South Vietnam's basically agrarian economy and its lack of exploitable natural resources make it depend heavily on foreign aid. Approximately 83 percent of the cultivated lowland is in small rice paddies. The slopes of the central highlands contain tea, rubber, and coffee plantations, but many of them had to be abandoned when military activities came too close. The long coastline is dotted with villages where about a quarter of a million people are engaged in the fishing industry.

a. The 5 million or so acres of uncultivated but fertile land in the highlands of the Chaine Annamatique were the special province of the seminomadic tribes until Diem's resettlement programs moved approximately 100,000 people in from the overcrowded coastal lowlands.

b. Approximately 85 percent of South Vietnam's people are farmers living in small hamlets and villages in the Mekong Delta and along the

coast in the lowlands. About 15 percent are city-dwellers; nearly 1.5 million were crowded into the metropolitan areas of Saigon-Cho Lon in 1955.

c. The piastre has been devalued in 1953 but has been directly supported by the United States since 1955. The central bank in Saigon has the exclusive right to issue currency and also holds the country's gold and its foreign reserves. Saigon-Cho Lon has 14 commercial banks, and some other urban areas have branch banks. The main enterprise of the banks is financing foreign trade. Imports have been maintained at a high level, although exports dropped off badly after 1954. Rice exports ceased entirely in 1965. The United States replaced France as the primary supplier of imports about 1957 and finances almost the entire import program.

d. Most of the Government revenue is obtained through customs duties and indirect taxes. Direct taxes are levied on land, business profits, and income but are hard to collect. Government budgets are as hard to decipher as the taxes are to collect. Reorganizations and transfers of funds among accounts plus simple neglect to report items, for whatever reason, make them unreliable expenditure indicators. Revenues never have financed more than a small part of the expenditures, and deficits in the already unbalanced budgets can only be met with foreign aid.

e. Few farmers receive any economic benefit from the influx of US money. The shortage of skilled labor in the business field keeps the wage levels high in the cities, and continuous inflation and rising living costs balance out wage increases. As a result, most small farmers' incomes are at or near subsistence levels. The French had attempted to develop an industrial base for the economy, but their main efforts were made in the north, where most of the limited industry and resource had existed before the French arrived. Those areas now are in North Vietnam, of course, and of no help to South Vietnam's economy. The United States also has tried to develop industry and to diversify agriculture in an effort to change the one-industry rice economy to a more balanced one. Lack of adequate investment has hampered industrialization since French colonial times. The Government announced a 5-year plan for industrial development in 1957, but the plan never got beyond the draft stage.

f. A shortage of trained technical, administrative, managerial, and professional people has hampered all aspects of economic development since the 18th century. Establishment of schools and initiation of on-the-job training have not yet eased the shortage noticeably. Obviously, the economy cannot support the country, and the country can exist only with outside monetary aid.

71. Geographic. The geography of South Vietnam is not conducive to conducting modern military operations of the type that would be normal in Europe or most of the Western Hemisphere. About 65 percent of the country

is rugged forested mountain areas, and most of the rest is flood plain and tidal land.

a. The Mekong Delta was built by the alluvial deposits of five branches of the Mekong and three other rivers. It is cultivated to the immediate shoreline, and tidal variations differ from as little as 3 feet near the coast to as much as 25 feet of Tonle Sap, the large lake in central Cambodia that is depended on (not always happily) by inhabitants of both countries to prevent floods. Continuing silt deposits from the river complex have made the delta one of the most fertile in the world.

b. The coastal lowlands are mostly tidal plains and are highly cultivated. They extend the length of the coastline from Cambodia to the 17th parallel and generally are very narrow. Their width varies from ? to 40 miles. Transportation is on a generally north-south axis, but the mountains of the central highlands make north-south passage very difficult except along the coast.

c. The Chaine Annamitique is a 750-mile-long spur of mountains that originate in Tibet and China. The coastal area generally east of the mountains in South Vietnam is compartmentalized by many crosswise spurs that reach for the sea. The plateaus of the central highlands are in an area about 100 x 200 miles. The northern part varies in altitude from 600 to 1,600 feet; much of the southern area is about 3,000 feet.

72. Climate. The climate is typically tropical--hot and damp. The winter and summer monsoons control the amount of rainfall for the whole area. During the summer monsoon from the southwest, very heavy rainfall occurs in the delta, the highland plateau, and the western slopes of the mountains. These areas become relatively dry when the winter monsoon from the northeast deposits torrential rains on the northeastern coastal plain. The period between the summer and winter monsoons, generally around August, is when typhoons often do great damage. Average annual rainfall is 70-80 inches and as much as 130 inches on the northeast coastal plain. The humidity remains at such a high level all year round that it almost leads the casual observer to think that the amount of actual rainfall couldn't make much difference. Temperatures vary only a few degrees from the mean average of 80° between the extreme north and south. Average temperature in the mountains is as much as 30 degrees below that of the lowlands and gives the highlands an almost temperate climate. The climate, except in the highlands, is generally debilitating and not conducive to violent exertion.

73. Demography. The majority of the people are scattered throughout the lowland areas in small hamlets and villages, and about half the population is in the Mekong Delta. The average density for the whole country is only about 240 per square mile, but the density rises to as high as 2,000 per square mile in parts of the Mekong Delta and drops to as low

as 13 per square mile in parts of the highlands. The barren strip of coast that reaches about 100 miles northeast of the delta has an even lower population density.

a. The influx of refugees from the north after the demarcation line was established overcrowded the cities and lowlands badly, a situation Ngo Dinh Diem tried to rectify with his resettlement programs. Many of the refugees moved into the highlands by these programs refused to stay, however, and moved back to their original "home" areas in the crowded lowlands. Most of this return movement is attributed to the lowlanders' belief that the highlands are populated by evil spirits in addition to the antisocial Montagnards, but a large part of it was to get away from the Viet Cong and its activities.

b. Most of the country's inhabitants are relatively immobilized by the ancestral cult that requires members of the family to remain near the tombs of their ancestors. They must care for the tombs and provide for and inform their ancestors' souls of important family events. Only about 10 percent of the populace lives in the cities, and 85 percent of the city dwellers are in Saigon/Cho Lon. Other major urban areas are Da Nang, Hue, Da Lat, and Vung Tau.

c. The labor force (estimated at 40 percent of the population) is divided occupationally as follows: 84 percent in agriculture; 4 percent in business; 3 percent in fishing; 2 percent in manufacturing and handicrafts; and 7 percent in services, construction, and transportation. The labor force actually is much higher than 40 percent of the populace, for the estimate includes only paid workers. Every member of a family works on the small farms, especially on small wet-rice farms during the growing season. The tea, rubber, and coffee plantations of the central highlands normally use the majority of hired farm workers, but many of them have been closed down because of military operations. Only about 5 percent of the labor force was in industry and commerce by 1961, and only a third of that percentage was in industry. The Government is the highest single employer in the country.

d. Estimates of manpower available for military service vary from 4 million to 5 million, and about 50 percent is physically fit for military service. The average adult male is about 5 feet 2 inches and weighs approximately 105 lb. His small size makes it difficult for him to use many items of US equipment. He is quick to learn, readily trained, amenable to discipline, and resourceful; however, he manifests little initiative and has little proclivity for assuming responsibility.

e. Most conscripts come from the lower economic classes: the farmer or the urban unskilled or semiskilled worker. Many of the men available as conscripts have little formal education. Remaining at the minimum educational level tends to immobilize a recruit, regardless of his ability or

skill in carrying out a function or his demonstrated exercise of leadership. Selection for the training and leadership schools is based on education to such a degree that only a negligible percentage of recruits from the lower economic classes can participate.

Section IV. Threats to Order.

74. Rise of nationalism. Vietnamese Nationalist sentiments traditionally were based on a desire to eliminate foreign rulers and return to the old order. Nationalist movements started to gain momentum among urban intellectuals early in the 20th century.

a. Several scholars headed unsuccessful movements between 1900 and 1916. Phan Chau Trinh tried to persuade the French to start training the Vietnamese for eventual independence in 1906; the French imprisoned him when he continued to agitate for reforms. Phan Boi Chau sought assistance from the Japanese in expelling the French and reestablishing the monarchy. His ideas gained a following among intellectuals but did not gain the support of the masses. Several scholars led the 1916 insurrection which had the blessing of Duy Tan, the young Emperor, and led to his exile.

b. The best known of many nationalist movements patterned after the Chinese movement was the Vietnam Nationalist Party. The forerunner of the Indochinese Communist Party already was in existence--the Association of Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth (VNP). The VP was started in Canton in 1925 in opposition to the Communist organization. A VNP uprising at Yen Bay near Hanoi in 1930 was crushed by the French. The thoroughness of the French action repressed militant action on the part of nationalists for some time. Many members who survived the uprising beat a hasty retreat into Yunnan, and the movement almost died out. At this point, Nguyen Ai Quoc, who was the leader of the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP), took over several other Communists parties and the VNP.

c. The very young Emperor Bao Dai returned from schooling in France 2 years later and enlisted the services of the young Governor of the Phan Thiet area, just south of the coastal highlands, in an attempt to get the French to liberalize their administration. Bao Dai wanted to reign according to the terms of the 1884 treaty as a constitutional monarch with a modern administration. He made the young Governor, Ngo Dinh Diem, his Minister of the Interior and chief of the secretariat of a French-Vietnamese commission supposed to implement his reforms. Both young men seemed to lose interest in the idea when the French made it unmistakably clear that they intended not to consider unifying the two protectorates with Cochin China to make Vietnam whole again or to permit Bao Dai to exercise any real power.

d. French agreement to Japanese occupation of Vietnam during World War II sparked a resurgency of nationalism. The Indochinese Communist Party started collaborating with all nationalist movements and formed

the Vietnam Independence League as a united front organization. The league--Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh in Vietnamese--became known as the Viet Minh. The Viet Minh very soon had guerrilla bands operating against both the Japanese and the French under the command of Vo Nguyen Giap and started establishing an intelligence network in Tonkin. Nguyen Ai Quoc, who was running the party from China, was imprisoned by the Chinese in 1942 because of his Communist activities, but this action did not slow the party's activities.

e. The Chinese had no intelligence source in Tonkin and now attempted to use the non-Communist VNP exiles to acquire one. The Chinese talked them into organizing a Revolutionary League of Vietnam (popularly called the Dong Minh Hoi) in October 1942 and gave it financial assistance through the Chinese Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang. Nguyen Ai Quoc offered to help the Chinese intelligence efforts and was released in 1943. It was at this time that he took the name Ho Chi Minh. The Chinese expected Ho to work through the Dong Minh Hoi, but he used its funds and worked only through the Viet Minh. In later years, Ho claimed that the Viet Minh had been supported by the Allies. His claim was based on the United States having given the Dong Minh Hoi some small arms and communication equipment to use in its intelligence gathering. Ho gained control of the Viet Minh by the end of the war, took credit for all the non-Communist nationalist activities during the war, and convinced the average Vietnamese that he was fighting only for national independence and against poverty and subsistence-level existence for the farmers.

f. The Japanese recommended that Bao Dai proclaim Vietnam an independent nation under their protection soon after they accomplished their coup d'etat against the French in March 1945. Bao Dai made the proclamation, but communication difficulties, famine, and Japanese establishment of military control over Cochin China precluded effective government by his administration. Viet Minh actions further eroded the effectiveness of his Government. Ho announced that he was President of a Committee for the Liberation of the Vietnamese People, named his guerrilla forces the National Liberation Army, and won control of Tonkin through a show of force.

g. Nationalists in Cochin China now joined together in a United National Front to supersede the Japanese administration, but factional differences prevented the front from being either administratively or politically effective; and Ho Chi Minh made a strategic move. He convinced both Bao Dai and the leaders of the front that the Allies had supported the Viet Minh and that it was a strong non-Communist nationalist movement. Bao Dai's abdication in favor of Ho in August 1945 convinced nearly all the Vietnamese that Ho and the Viet Minh were their legitimate leaders. Ho announced the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam a few days later and carefully concealed his Communist intents and aims.

h. Ho worked with the Chinese in the north of Vietnam at the end of the war to get their assistance in furthering the Viet Minh's "nationalist" aims. He moved ahead by "dissolving" the Indochinese Communist Party late in 1945 and by holding elections for a National Assembly in January 1946 and forming a coalition government with himself as President. France had reestablished its sovereignty over the south and signed an agreement with the Chinese in February giving the French the right to Indochina in return for surrendering its extraterritorial rights in China and granting duty-free passage of freight between China and Vietnam. It was during this period of Chinese occupation of the north that the Viet Minh strengthened its forces for the inevitable conflict with the French. Residents of the north were forced to surrender their gold for purchase of Chinese weapons. Approximately 3,000 rifles, 50 automatic rifles, 600 submachine guns, and 100 mortars of American manufacture were purchased. The Viet Minh also obtained approximately 31,000 rifles, 700 automatic weapons, 36 artillery pieces, and 18 tanks of French and Japanese manufacture that the Chinese were supposed to have secured but did not.

i. Ho Chi Minh and the French signed an agreement in March 1946 which accorded recognition to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as a member of the French Union and as a free state within the not-yet-organized Inodochinese Federation. The Vietnamese interpreted the agreement to be recognition of a state that encompassed all three regions of Vietnam, but the French did not. A Paris conference to settle the interpretation was dissolved when the French established the Republic of Cochin China in June 1946. Ho felt constrained to sign a modus vivendi in September that recognized neither Vietnamese independence nor unity, facilitated French resumption of power in Vietnam, and promised liberalization of French administrative practices in Vietnam. A month later, the "Haiphong incident" started the 8-year-long Indochinese War.

75. The Indochinese War. French reestablishment of control over the main cities and roads in the north forced the Viet Minh into the jungle and usage of guerrilla tactics. In 3 years, the Viet Minh tactics had given it control of large areas in the countryside and had boxed in the French forces to the point that they did not have firm control outside the large cities.

a. Anti-Communist Vietnamese nationalists would not side with the French against the Viet Minh, because France had not made a clear statement of its policy about independence and unity for Vietnam. They formed a front to create a national Government and asked Bao Dai to return from Hong Kong and head it. The French leaped at an apparent opportunity to aline the nationalists on their side and offered freedom to Vietnam within the French Union. Bao Dai refused to do more than represent Vietnam during negotiations, for fear he might be made a puppet ruler for the French. The Viet Minh assassinated many prominent nationalist leaders

during these negotiations and alienated the Hoa Hao entirely by killing a Hoa Hao leader in 1947.

b. France gave in after 2 years of negotiation and agreed to limited independence for Vietnam as a state in the French Union. Bao Dai became the Chief of State but could not bring the important nationalists with him into his Government, because they wanted complete independence instead of the limited independence Bao Dai had accepted.

c. Communist China started providing assistance to the Viet Minh in 1950, and the tempo of the war accelerated as the Viet Minh launched offensive actions against the French and VNA forces. They were slowed when the French received US equipment, but only temporarily. As the two forces reached a relative balance of power, a stalemate situation was created wherein the French controlled areas where tank warfare was possible, and the Viet Minh controlled the areas where tank warfare was not possible.

d. Soon after the Geneva negotiations started, France made Vietnam a sovereign independent nation. The debacle at Dien Bien Phu aroused popular opinion in France against continuation of the war, and the negotiations ended with the "temporary" partition of the country at the demilitarized zone. The negotiation called for mutual total evacuation of the opposing forces to their own sides of the demarcation line and prohibited buildup of forces on either side. The Republic of Vietnam objected strenuously to the terms of the agreement and the manner in which they were reached. It wanted UN forces to control the whole country until free elections could be held, didn't like the date set for the elections, and liked the partitioning least of all. The United States agreed to uphold the terms of the agreement but refused to sign it.

e. The administrative and military control of South Vietnam was transferred to Bao Dai's administration, and the forces were withdrawn by both sides. Ho Chi Minh, however, left a well-organized underground behind as the nucleus of insurgency against the new Government.

76. Breakdown of police control. The early Vietnamese Communists did not achieve much success. The effectiveness of the French security police forced the Communists to use clandestine methods and to work through traditionalist groups rather than to make direct appeals to the masses.

a. When Ngo Dinh Diem became Prime Minister of the Republic of Vietnam in 1954, the administrative structure of the Government still was based on the French system. The French had not wanted to develop a sense of independence or authority among its Vietnamese civil servants, so the system had remained paternalistic and ineffective. Administrative and managerial ability and experience were lacking in the police as much as

in any other sector, and trained and experienced local police were not available in most parts of the country.

b. When the Viet Minh withdrew from south of the demarcation line, Ho Chi Minh left several thousand men and many arms and equipment caches behind in jungle hideouts in the Mekong Delta and in the central highlands. These men acted as a cadre or nucleus for new Communist bands, organized to attempt to overthrow the Government, named Viet Nam Cong San (Vietnam Communists) and usually abbreviated to Viet Cong. Vietnamese Communists who had gone north with the withdrawing Viet Minh and received training in subversive tactics now returned to become leaders of the Viet Cong. They started a campaign through the villages and mountains, based on their knowledge of the people's desire for independence, and sold many of the villagers on the idea that they were working only for nationalism and against colonialism. This campaign, which was a continuing project, gained widespread sympathy and brought many villagers into the Viet Cong camp.

c. The Government was trying simultaneously to resettle nearly a million refugees from the Communists in the north, design a workable political administration, revive the economy, and combat insurgency. Its efforts were challenged and its problems increased by actions of the two politicoreligious groups, the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao, and the Binh Xuyen gangsters (see 68 above).

d. The Viet Cong started their pattern of insurgent actions very soon after the republic was established, but concentrated on recruiting South Vietnamese and adding to and improving their bases in the hinterlands during 1956 and 1957. Despite Diem's 1955 reorganization of the police forces and creation of new agencies, the Viet Cong continued to increase its political and military offensive, and the lack of security in the countryside became serious. The Civil Guard was incapable of providing security for the hamlets and villages, and the remainder of the police establishment was hindered by inefficiency, corruption, and poor leadership and management.

e. Failure of the police to cope with the Viet Cong, the galloping increase in crime, and Diem's use of the police during elections created a widening gulf between the people and the police as well as the rest of the Government. To close the vicious circle, the people's lack of confidence in the police decreased police ability to function effectively and further alienated the people from the Government apparatus. Diem did not improve the situation any when he appointed Lai Huu Sang, a former Binh Xuyen member, as Director General of Police and Security Services. Several hundred policemen who had helped crush the Binh Xuyen resigned for fear of retaliation by Lai.

f. Police operations at this time were characterized by violence and brutality. Student demonstrations against the Government were broken up by ruthless police action, and "Nhu's secret police," the Social and Political Research Service, brutally attacked Buddhists in their pagodas.

g. Murders of Government officials began in 1957. Isolated acts of terrorism soon reached epidemic proportions and turned into guerrilla actions against villages and major ambush actions against both the police and the militia. The Government and the US MAAG perceived these actions as death throes of Viet Minh remnants and did not encourage Army participation in countering the threat. More than 4,000 local officials were assassinated in a single year; the police were helpless; the Army could not assist; and the link between the people and the Government was broken. Without that link, the Government was operating in a vacuum, so far as knowing the people's needs was concerned.

h. The ineffectiveness of the Civil Guard and the Self Defense Corps was not caused only by lack of adequate training and equipment; both groups had been thoroughly infiltrated by the Viet Cong. The Viet Cong had embarked on a new program of terrorism in 1958 after they increased their ranks to about 12,000 equipped men. Reinforcements continued to arrive from the north, and more local people were recruited. They had three types of forces: full-time guerrillas, now called main force units; part-time guerrillas, now called local units; and village activists, now called guerrillas. The village activists worked as farmers or in other regular jobs during the day and functioned as guerrillas under orders of a full-time guerrilla leader at night. Police effectiveness against this kind of operation was virtually nil. The activists reported their movements and identified lucrative targets for the guerrillas while appearing to be subsistence farmers working their rice paddies or mountain farmers or working as artisans. The police reached the point of refusing to conduct normal highway operations or to remain overnight in villages suspected of being controlled or threatened by the Viet Cong.

i. The need to counter the infiltration and infrastructure threat probably was recognized as early as 1957, but no system existed at the time for taking such action. The police still were fragmented among Government departments, and there was no central structure to unify and coordinate police efforts.

j. Other general factors contributed to the ineffectiveness of the various police agencies. Most of the laws supposed to be enforced were the result of presidential decree rather than of legislation and did not define jurisdictional or functional responsibility clearly. Several police agencies operated in each town, district, and province, creating serious functional and jurisdictional overlapping and making it almost impossible to sort out the service each police agency should provide or

to establish responsibilities among agencies. Further results of the confusion were inefficient use of personnel and unnecessary delays in initiating actions.

k. The Government's antisubversion campaign also devitalized police operations. During this campaign, persons suspected of Communist leanings were reported to the police. Apparently the method of operation was to arrest and jail suspects on relatively flimsy evidence and then use physical abuse in an attempt to extract information from them. This operation clogged the security apparatus with thousands of false accusations and consumed valuable police time in activities that increased the people's fear of and lack of confidence in them. The people began to believe that they needed protection from governmental abuse as well as from that of the Viet Cong.

l. Part of the fault rested at the door of the police, but only part. Part of the problem was that the police were unprepared psychologically as well as in training, organization, and equipment to do the job that needed to be done. The major fault, however, rested with the Government leaders who did not recognize that they, like the French before them, were faced with a revolution.

m. The popularity of the Diem regime had dropped as early as 1957 because of tight Government controls and Diem's emerging image as a dictator, among other reasons. Diem knew that he was dependent for his political existence on a loyal few. As he continued to make key appointments on the basis of personal loyalty to him without regard for actual job qualifications, efficiency in all sectors became progressively more inhibited. In the case of the police, it put the finishing touch to any hope for an effective and useful force during his tenure.

Section V. Findings.

77. Security forces. The military forces of the republic were not prepared in any way to accomplish the overwhelming job that faced them during the preconflict period. The military institution was known more for its coups and intrigues than for its prowess on the battlefield by 1954. This was not a function of the low-ranking soldier but of those at the highest levels who used the military for their own purposes--political, monetary, or other.

a. The Army was hampered in performing its mission by the lack of adequate universal education and of trained experienced officers for high level commands. This problem was created by a number of factors: the disinterest of the French military in turning authority over to Vietnamese and the consequent lack of training and experience opportunities that were available to the Vietnamese officers; the position of the Vietnamese for so many years as colonial subjects; the ingrained "inwardness"

of the Vietnamese culture; the traditional attitude of amiable noncooperation with any outside authority superimposed on their feudal system; the one-crop economy that effectively prevented social mobility; the regionalism brought about by the physical geography of the country; and the people's indoctrination for more than 2,000 years in the Confucian teaching of the golden mean (the way of wisdom and reasonableness between extremes) and that harmony throughout the universe is to be desired above all else.

b. Vietnamese are excellent fighting men who learn quickly, accept discipline, and are resourceful. Adequate training and equipment increased their self-confidence remarkably, which raised their combat effectiveness proportionately. As any other people anywhere, they had to be motivated before they could give their best.

c. Ngo Dinh Diem's reliance on personal loyalty in selecting key personnel for his administration was a primary factor in causing breakdowns in all sectors of the political and social fabric of the country and had an especially adverse effect on the security forces.

78. Economy. The lack of a sensible farsighted program for economic development has made South Vietnam totally dependent on outside aid. Shortsighted economic programs boomeranged and made the lot of the common man no better, despite the honest desire of the Diem administration to create a forward-oriented growing economy that would benefit all members of the society. The economic conditions that prevailed during the preconflict period were a key factor in the Communists' success in causing the sustaining internal conflict.

79. Geography. The terrain, climate, and geography of the country, coupled with its juxtaposition to Communist China and its relative isolation from the non-Communist world create an ideal situation for insurgency and Communist subversion. The lack of knowledge of the reason for the American Indian's strategies and tactics by the British was analogous to the situation in South Vietnam; the Vietnamese had to learn to use the country's physical characteristics to their advantage as well as the enemy did before it ceased to be a hampering factor. The French apparently did not have adequate knowledge of the kind of military activities that the physiography permits or couldn't convince themselves that it really was so important; the Vietnamese do not have this problem. Thus, the geography of the country was a key factor in the beginning that has decreased, progressively, in importance.

80. Government. The administration had two strikes against it when it came into being, because the economic situation precluded its being a government of the people by the people and because of the lack of availability of experienced, trustworthy individuals for any but the lowest level positions. This situation was bound to affect all aspects of the situation adversely.

ANNEX I

THE GENEVA ACCORDS

1. By the spring of 1954, France had been carrying on a difficult and deadly conflict with the Communist insurgents in Vietnam for more than 8 years. The French people were tired of the War and longed to see it ended. The United States, on the other hand, following John Foster Dulles' policy of Communist containment, was actively supporting France in the War and wished to see it continue or be successfully concluded. The Soviet Union was pleased with the conflict, because it placed France and the United States in a predicament, was estranging the United States and Great Britain, and showed great promise of delivering a valuable nation into the Communist camp.

2. But the pressures of Korea and Indochina were placing all concerned in dire straits. The foreign ministers of Great Britain, the United States, the USSR, and France met in Berlin in February 1954 and agreed to convene a conference at Geneva which would have the dual purpose of solving the Korean question and bringing peace to Indochina. The military position of France continued to deteriorate however; on 7 May 1954, the very day before which formal discussion of the Indochinese question was to begin, they suffered a monumental military setback with the fall of the French fortress at Dien Bien Phu. The Government of France toppled from power when news of this disaster reached Paris and was replaced by one led by Pierre Mendes-France. The main attraction of Mendes-France's Government was its promise to disengage France from Indochina or resign. It was under these ominous clouds that the Big Four powers, along with delegations from the People's Republic of China, Laos, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North), and the State (soon to be Republic) of Vietnam (South), convened the Geneva Conference.

3. There were numerous secret meetings and agreements between the participants. The regular provisions endorsed in the Final Declaration of the Conference were as follows:

a. There will be a complete and simultaneous cessation of hostilities throughout Vietnam, and a withdrawal of the opposing forces to either side of a "provisional military demarcation line" fixed roughly at the 17th parallel (Agreement Arts 1-15, Final Declaration paras 1-2). The French Union Forces "shall be regrouped" to the south of the provisional military demarcation line, and the forces of the People's Army of Vietnam shall be regrouped to the north of that line.

b. No troop reinforcements of additional military personnel, or arms, munitions or war material may be introduced into either military regrouping zone in Vietnam (Agreement Arts 16-17, Final Declaration para 4).

c. No new military bases and no military base under the control of a foreign state may be established in either military regrouping zone in Vietnam (Agreement Arts 18-19, Final Declaration para 5).

d. Neither of the two military regrouping zones shall adhere to any military alliance, and neither shall be "used for the resumption of hostilities or to further an aggressive policy" (Agreement Art 19, Final Declaration para 5).

e. An International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam, consisting of Canada, India, and Poland, is established "for the control and supervision of the application of the provisions of the agreement . . ." (Agreement Art 34). The parties shall give the International Commission "all possible assistance and cooperation" (Agreement Art 25).

f. "Pending the general elections which will bring about the unification of Vietnam, the conduct of civil administration in each regrouping zone shall be in the hands of the party whose forces are to be regrouped there in virtue of the present Agreement" (Agreement Art 14(a), endorsed by the Final Declaration in para 7).

4. The Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference also explicitly recognized what was implicit in the establishment of military regrouping zones in the Agreement of the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam. Paragraph 6 of the Final Declaration states that:

> The Conference recognizes that the essential purpose of the agreement relating to Vietnam is to settle military questions with a view to ending hostilities and that the military demarcation line is provisional and should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary.

In addition, with regard to free elections, paragraph 7 of the Final Declaration states that:

> The Conference declares that, so far as Vietnam is concerned, the settlement of political problems, effected on the basis of respect for the principles of independence, unity and territorial integrity shall permit the Vietnamese people to enjoy the fundamental freedoms, guaranteed by democratic institutions established as a result of free

general elections by secret ballot. In order to ensure that sufficient progress in the restoration of peace has been made, and that all the necessary conditions obtain for free expression of the national will, general elections shall be held in July 1956, under the supervision of an international commission composed of representatives of the Member States of the International Supervisory Commission, referred to in the agreement on the cessation of hostilities. Consultations will be held on this subject between the competent representative authorities of the two zones from 20 July 1955 onward.

5. Another important document to come out of this Conference was the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam which was signed by the Commander of the French Forces in Indochina and the DRV's commander of the Peoples Army in Vietnam on 20 July 1954. The Final Declaration which endorsed the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam was not signed but was accepted orally by Britain, France, the Chinese People's Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The United States and the State of Vietnam did not agree to the Final Declaration, although the United States did issue a unilateral declaration which took note of the Final Declaration and the Agreement and promised that, in accord with its obligations under the UN charter, it would not threaten or use force to disturb these Accords but would view any violation of the Accords with the gravest concern. The State of Vietnam, while refusing to accept the Accords, promised not to use force to disturb the cease-fire and to work for a true peace in Vietnam.

6. To supervise these Accords, the Conference established an International Control Commission to supervise mobile inspection teams, which would guarantee that the provisions of the Conference were carried out. This commission was to be composed of one delegate each from Canada, Poland, and India, with the Indian as chairman. Agreement on simple matters could be resolved by a majority, and more serious matters had to be decided unanimously. One member of the commission, however, had the right to classify an issue serious and, therefore, little was ever accomplished by the commission.

7. It is obvious that there were violations both of the spirit and of the letter of these agreements. It also is obvious that the greatest number of these violations, and the most violent, were perpetrated by Communists. The list of specific violations is much too long for this analysis, but in the main they consisted of storing great caches of weapons and other materiel in the south, failure to withdraw all troops to positions above the 17th parallel, interference with the migration of refugees from north to south, and overt hostile acts against the legal Government of the south. Both the South Vietnamese

and the United States used force in countering these violations when it became apparent that the ICC would not be effective. The south also failed to sponsor the elections agreed to in the Geneva Accords, because its administration believed that there was no possibility they could be just.

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